FIVE
GODLY, AND PROfitable Sermons concerning.

1 *The ſlaverie of ſinne.*
2 *The miſcheife of ignorance.*
3 *The roote of Apoſtaſie.*
4 *The benefit of Gods ſervice.*
5 *The Chriſtians loue.*

Preached in his life time in ſundry places.

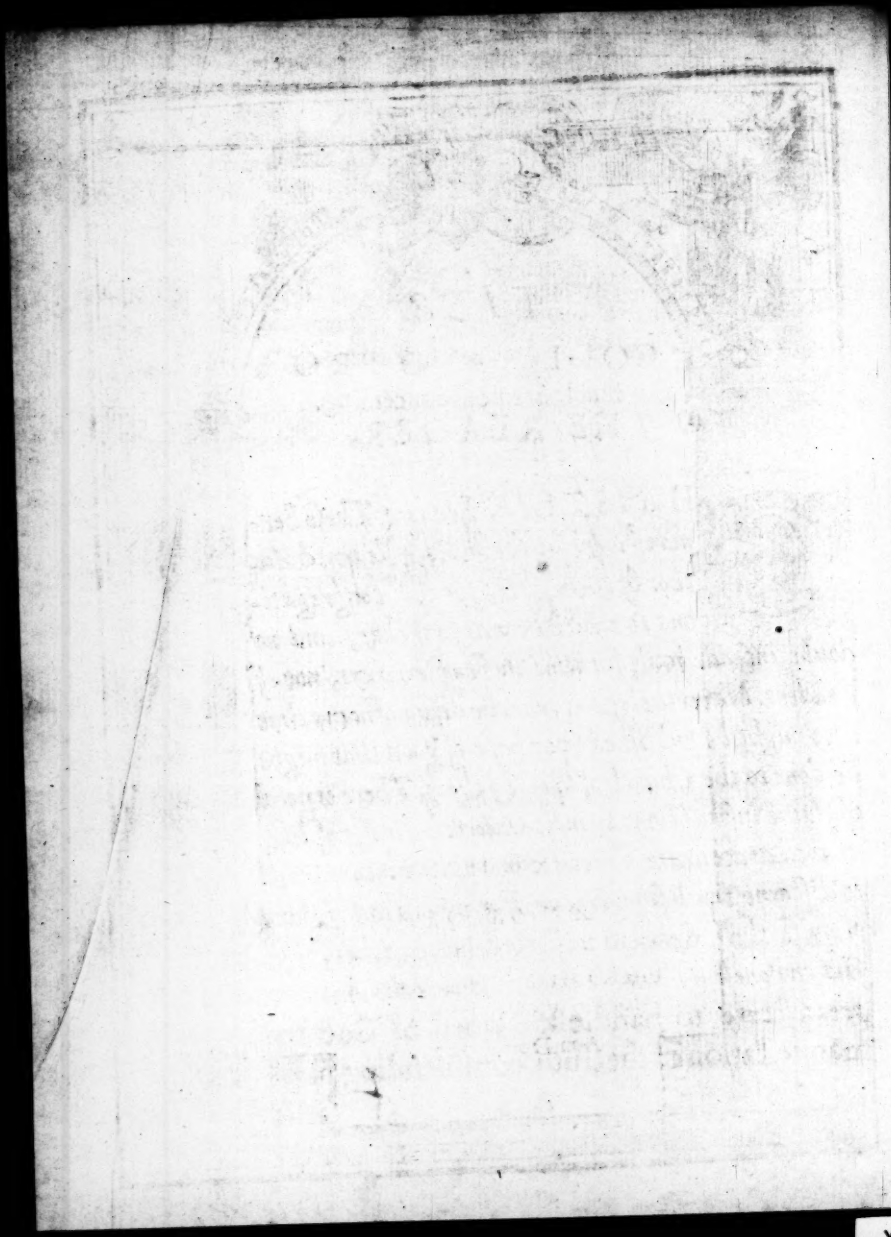
By that late faithfull Miniſter of Chriſt
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of Magdalen Hall in the
Vniverſitie of
Oxford.

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XUM



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TO THE READER.

CHRISTIAN Reader: Theſe Sermons were, by the godly, & learned Author of them, fitted for the congregations to which he was to ſpeake, and no doubt intended only for the benefit of hearers, not of Readers. Nevertheleſſe it was the deſire of many that they might be publiſhed vpon hope of good that might be done to the Church of God by them. There is need of plaine inſtructions to incite men to holineſſe of life, as well as accurate Treatiſes in points contorverted to diſcerne truth from errour. For which end I dare promiſe theſe Sermons will make much, where they find an honeſt, & humble Reader. It was the Authors greateſt care to handle the word of God by manifeſtation of the truth, commending him-

selfe to every mans conscience in the sight of God, *as once S. Paul pleaded for himselfe.* 2. Cor. 4. 2. *And if that be the property (which they say) of an eloquent, and good speaker,* non ex ore, sed ex pectore, *to speake from his heart rather than his tongue, then surely this Author was an excellent Orator, one that spake out of sound vnderstanding with true affection. Many excellencies there were in him for which his memory remaines: but this aboue all was his crowne that hee vnfaignedly sought Gods glory, and the good of mens soules. It remaines, that these Sermons be read by thee with a care to profit, and thankesgiuing to God for the benefit thou hast by them, sith they are such talents, as in the vse of which hee requires, and expects to bee glorified. Farewell.*

A. Gell. noct. Attic. lib. 1. cap. 15.

Thine in the Lord Iesus

IOHN TOMBES.



Ioh. 8. 34.

Ieſus anſwered them: verily, verily I ſay vnto you, that whoſoever committeth ſinne is the ſervant of ſinne.



O acquaint you briefly with the occaſion of theſe words: their coherence with the foregoing and following verſes ſtandes thus. Vpon ſome conference and arguments betweene our Saviour Chriſt and the Phariſees with other of the Iewes about the qualitie of his perſon, who and what manner of man he ſhould bee; Chriſt having plainely teſtified who he was, even the light of the world, th t Meſſiah whom they had ſo long expected: it ſo comes to paſſe, that many of the people that were preſent hearing Chriſt defend his authority againſt the cavils of the Phariſees, were thereby *moved to believe in him, ver.* 30. Vnto

theſe beleiuers Chriſt directs his ſpeech, telling them that it was not enough for the preſent to ſeeme forward in embracing & yeelding aſſent vnto his doctrine. There is more in it then ſo, if they will proue themſelues to be true beleeuers and his Diſciples they muſt perſevere in the profeſſion and practiſe of his Doctrine (*If yee continue in my word yee are verily my Diſciples*) *verſ.* 31. Now whereas many things might diſcourage theſe young beginners from going on further, eſpecially their ignorance of this heavenly Doctrine, and withall thoſe manifold ſinfull Corruptions from which they could not quickly ſhift themſelues, Chriſt for their encouragement addes by way of promiſe, that if they will hold on, they both (*ſhall knowe the truth*) *vz:* The Goſpell, and all the waies of Gods grace in mans redemption by Chriſt, and further (*the truth ſhall make them free*) *verſ.* 32. from the bondage of ſuch inconveniences as might keepe them backe from the reſolute profeſſion of the Goſpell, as feare of the diſpleaſure of the Phariſees and Rulers, feare of loſſe, diſgrace and reproach in the world, loue of thoſe ſinnes and pleaſures wherein they liued heretofore and which now they might be vnwilling to leaue. Thoſe incumbrances, which cauſed many a one to withdrawe himſelfe from following of Chriſt, our Saviour promiſeth theſe beleeuers, that if they will bee conſtant they ſhall haue no power nor Command ouer them: But that the grace of God in the cleere knowledge of the Goſpell ſhould make them Freemen, and ſet them at liberty from the feare or loue of all ſuch things, as might pull them aſide from an holy profeſſion of the name of Chriſt, *verſ.* 32. This louing admonition of Chriſt is very ill taken by the Iewes. Chriſt had touched vpon that ſtring that jarred, and they might not endure to be thus cloſely, though iuſtly taxed for hypocrites and Counterfeits, ſuch as were ſo farre from being true beleiuing Diſciples vnto him, as that they ſtill continued in bondage vnto their corruption and would bee ready vpon every

every occaſion to flie off from Chriſts ſervice. Wherefore when Chriſt tells them that the truth ſhould make them freemen, out of a perverſe miſtake they turne this clauſe into occaſion of quarrell, and take great exceptions at Chriſt for calling them ſlaues and bondmen (*wee bee*, ſay they, in great ſtomacke, *Abrahams ſeed and were never in bondage to any man*; *Why ſaieſt thou then yee ſhall bee made free, verſ.* 33.) Thoſe commonly bragge moſt that may doe leaſt, and yee haue few that ſtand more ſtifly vpon termes of reputation, then thoſe that haue leaſt true worth in themſelues. So it is with theſe worthleſſe Iewes, who ſtand punctually vpon points of honour to cleare themſelues from that imputation of bodily ſlavery, which Chriſt laid on them (as they thought) when yet in the meane time they are of all ſlaues the baſeſt, *vz.* ſervants of ſinne and corruption. They ſaid ſomething that was true, that *they were Abrahams Children* borne of Sarah the Free-woman, and this Chriſt denied not. But whereas they had ſaid, *they were never in bondage to any man* that was falſe euen in regard of their Corporall bondage. For their bondage in Egypt of old, their Captivity for 70. yeares in Aſſyria of latter times, and the preſent ſubiection of their whole ſtate vnder the yoke of the Roman gouernment was witneſſe ſufficient that it was no ſuch ſtrange matter for a Iew to bee a bondman. But ſay they had beene alwaies free from ſuch bodily ſlavery, this was not that which Chriſt aymed at in that ſpeech of his (*the truth ſhall make you free*) 'twas ſpirituall ſervitude vnder the power of ſinne which hee meant, and ſeeing they will not otherwiſe vnderſtand him, hee declares himſelfe in plaine termes in this 34. *verſe*, *Verily, verily, I ſay vnto you, whoſoever committeth ſinne is the ſervant of ſinne*) There are ſervants of ſinne as well as ſervants of men, and the Condition of thoſe is as bad as of theſe, yea worſe. Chriſt makes the compariſon in two particulars.

1. Servants muſt haue no inheritance with the free borne Children.

Children, they may for a while enioy the common benefit of the familie: but at laſt they muſt be turned out and the children only divide the inheritance: ſo wicked men for a while liue together in Gods houſe the Church: but when the reward of inheritance ſhall bee beſtowed on the children of God, theſe are vtterly throwne out of all, and no part fals to their ſhare. This is expreſſed, ver. 35. (*And the ſeruant abideth not in the houſe for ever but the ſonne abideth forever.*)

2 Seruants muſt haue their freedome from a free man that hath power to ſet them at liberte. So muſt ſinners from Chriſt the only ſonne of God, who hath this power and authority giuen vnto him of bondſlaues to Sathan and ſinne to make them Gods freemen. Hee alone brings deliuerance to captiues and priſoners, tranſlating miſerable ſinners, from vnder the command of the power of darkneſſe into the liberty of Gods adopted ſonnes; who being himſelfe made heire of all things as Gods naturall ſonne admits vs the adopted ſonnes into the fellowſhip of a glorious inheritance This is ſet downe, verſ. 36. (*If the ſonne therefore ſhall make you free yee ſhall be free indeed.*) Thus the ſeruants of ſinne are in an ill caſe ſure to be turned out of houſe and home, except the ſonne of God Ieſus Chriſt ſhall purchaſe their freedome and beſtow an inheritance vpon them. But what? Were theſe Iewes here ſuch kinde of bondmen? Yea that they were: and Chriſt makes it good in the two verſes following by vndeniable arguments. Their vngodly practiſe ſhewed plainely what maſter they ſerued, and by whoſe cõmand they were ruled, [*I know*, ſaith Chriſt, *yee are Abrahams ſeed*] *viz:* according to the fleſh. and ſo borne of free parents: but yet yee are not freemen ſo long as malice, contempt of the Goſpell, loue of the world, bloody deſires of an innocent mans death, with ſuch like corruptions, tyrannize and beare rule over your hearts as they doe. For why? [*but yee ſeeke to kill me.*] A cruell maſter it muſt be that will command, and very ſlaues they are that will bee obedient

to

to doe ſo ill an office as to murther Chriſt. But the reaſon followes yee doe it (*becauſe my words haue no place in you.*) That moſt holy, pure, meeke, and peaceable Doctrine of the Goſpell, which Chriſt publiſhed vnto them could haue no command ouer their hearts to win them to ſubiection & obedience therevnto: they were engaged to another maſter & to his word they would obey, not Chriſts, not Gods, *verſ.* 37. which in the next *verſ.* 38. appeares yet more plainely.) I, ſaith Chriſt, *ſpeake vnto you that which I haue ſeene with my Father: & ye doe that which you haue ſeene with your Father*) (i) I ſpeake vnto you the will of God, and you obey the will of the Divell. Whence it is eaſie to iudge vnto whom yee belong, and whether yee bee the Children of God free ſubiects vnder his gracious goverament, or the children of the Divell and ſlauiſh vaſſalls vnder his merciloſſe tyrannie. You ſee now the occaſion and coherence of theſe wordes I haue read vnto you. The ſcope whereof in breefe is this: To giue theſe Iewes right information of their preſent condition what it was. They in great errour boaſted themſelues much vpon their outward libertie while yet they were the ſervants of vnrighteouſnes. Wherefore our Saviour for their inſtruction and ours lets them vnderſtand that they be ſlaues that ſerue ſinne as well as thoſe that ſerue men: And for this purpoſe he pronounceth to them and vs this moſt certaine & vndeniable truth (*Verily, verily I ſay vnto you whoſoever Committeth ſinne is the ſervant of ſinne.* The meaning of the words is plaine if you obſerue.

1 What it is to commit ſinne. 2. What to be a ſeruant of ſinne. To commit ſinne is not ſimply to doe any act contrary to the law and will of God: for even the regenerate and moſt ſanctified men in many things ſin often, who nevertheleſſe are not the ſervants of ſinne but are *free from ſinne and made the ſervants of God.* as it is *Rom:* 6.22. In this place therefore to commit ſinne [ποιῶν τὴν ἁμαρτίαν] is to doe evill willingly and ordinarily: When men make, as it were a trade and common practiſe of breaking the law of God

holding on in an vsuall course of vngodly liuing without remorse and reformation, of such Christ tels vs that they bee the servants or slaues [Δοῦλοι] of sinne (1) they liue in subiectiō to the power of their sinfull Corruption, as slaues doe to the command of their masters. Sinne rules ouer them as masters doe over their servants. The maine point of Doctrine then that these words doe afford is this.

Doct. *A sinner is a bondslaue, & to liue in sinne is to liue in thraldome.* For the more distinct explication of this point touching mans spirituall bondage vnder sinne I desire you to obserue three particulars,

1 *The nature of this bondage wherein it consists.*
2 *The diuerse degrees and kindes of it.*
3 *The greatnesse and grievousnesse of it.*

For the first: the bondage of sinne standeth chiefly in two things. 1 *In subiection to the power of sinne.*
2 *In subiection to the punishment of sinne.*

The power and authority that sinne hath ouer man is seene in two particulars.

1 *In restraining his liberty from doing of good.*
2 *In commanding his service in all bad employments.* As a master ouer his servants can both bid and forbid them: So the sinne that rules in mens mortall bodies hath power both to restraine them from good and to employ them in evill practises: you shall see both true in their order.

1 *Sinne hath power of restraint and hindering from the doing of good.* A slaue is not in his owne power but his masters, hee cannot goe whether hee will, nor doe what hee lists, nor dispose of himselfe as he pleaseth, his service, his goods, his life, are all ordered by his masters discretion. So is it with a sinner who is holden in the fetters and chaines of his corruption, he is not his owne man, nor can he doe what many times he would. In men that are regenerate and sanctified in part experience yet witnesseth how much they are pestered and cumbred with this sinne that hangeth on so fast

faſt about them. How ever the ſpirit bee willing, and faine they would doe much in the ſeruice of God; yet the fleſh is weake, and they are ſo ſhackled with it, that for their liues they can make but ſlow haſt in the waies of godlineſſe, much adoe they haue to keepe jogging on. dulneſſe, diſtraction, hypocriſie, formality, and a world of other corruptions ſet vpon them in every ſpirituall duty, in every good reſolution; ſo that when they do beſt, their work is yet done but to halues. Grace is yoked with corruption, when that puts vs forward, this pulls vs backward, inſomuch that a regenerate man is but halfe a freeman, being alwaies in ſome ſort moleſted by his corruption in the whole courſe of his religious conuerſation, according as the Apoſtle Paul in the perſon of euery regenerate man complaines very pittifully. *Rom. 7. 19. 20. 21.* But now in thoſe that are vnregenerate this power of ſin is much more predominant, whoſe hearts, affections, vnderſtandings, and all in them are faſt locked and barred vp vnder impenitencie, rebellion and blindneſſe, ſo that they are *holden priſoners of Satan at his pleaſure*, as the Apoſtle ſpeaketh, *2. Tim. 2. 26.* Sinne hath dealt with thoſe men as wee doe with wild fowle, clipping their wings that they may not fly away; or as enimies doe with captiues diſarme them of their weapons that they ſhall be able to make no ſhift for their reſcue. So hath ſinne vtterly diſabled man to euery good worke by putting out the eyes of his knowledge, and ſtripping him naked of all thoſe graces & ſtrength which he had by creation. Beſide this, ſinne hath taken away all deſire of doeing good, hauing affected the ſoule of man with the loue of all vnrighteouſnes, whereby it comes to paſſe that man is well contented to be the ſeruant of ſinne taking great delight in his owne ſhame and miſery: Vnregenerate men are kept faſt in durance, being neither able nor willing to come out of their bondage. In this reſpect is ſinne compared to ſnares and nets, and bonds wherein men are caught, and

kept faſt for eſcaping, [*I finde* ſaith *Solomon*, *Eccleſ.* 7. 28. *more bitter then death, the woman whoſe heart is as nets and ſnares, & her hands as bonds.*] Therby ſignifying the moſt intangling and inthralling nature of the ſinne of adultery, whereinto few men fall that ever get out againe [*I ſee that thou art in the gall of bitterneſſe, and in the bond of iniquity*) ſaith *Peter* to *Simon Magus Acts* 8. 23. Why becauſe for all his ſeeming profeſſion, he was ſtill tyed to his couetouſnes & other vile affections, like a ſlaue bound to a poſt with a chaine. So *Paul* exhorts *Timothy* that he inſtruct his hearers to the end they might (*Come to amendment and recouer out of the ſnare of the Diuell, of whom they were taken priſoners at his will.* 2. *Tim.* 2.26.) And for this cauſe are ſinners in the ſtate of vnregeneration, compared to captiues and priſoners kept vp in reſtraint, *Iſaiah.* 61. 1. *Iſai.* 42. 7.

But here you are to note that Satan and ſinne doe not deale alike rigorouſly with all: they carry a ſtraighter hand ouer ſome then ouer others. Some they keep *Arcta cuſtodia* in cloſe impriſonment. And that is when men by Satan and corruption are made ſo ſure and ſo faſt chained, that they cannot goe one ſtep beyond prophaneſſe & impiety. Thus is it with men, that are kept cloſe priſoners in the darke dungeon of ignorance, or who ſticke faſt in the dirt or mire of beaſtly couetous, and voluptuous affections: in a word thoſe that are giuen ouer to all vngodly and lewd courſes. Others there are who are indeed priſoners, but yet they are kept *in libera cuſtodia* in a larger kinde of reſtraint, or as we ſay, in free priſon. And this is when Satan ſporting ſtimſelfe in the ſinne and miſery of man holds him in a longer chaine, and lets him goe a good way outward in Chriſtianity; but yet at laſt fetcheth him backe againe when he pleaſeth, like birds in a larger cage they flutter about, or like birds in a ſtring that make a faire flight vp towards heauen; but Satan when he ſpies his advantage, that by their fall he may giue ſome notable foyle to Gods glory, and the credit of his

Goſpell;

Goſpell, then he twitcheth the ſtring and downe they tumble vnto hell. Such are thoſe of which *Peter* ſpeakes 2. *Peter* 2.18.19.20. *Who had eſcaped farre from the filthineſſe of the world, but yet were intangled againe therein.* Such a one was *Demas* whoſe couetouſneſſe hookt him back from his profeſſion of the Goſpell to the world. And ſuch was the young man in the Goſpell, who was come neere to the kingdome of heauen, but he had one legge chained faſt to the loue of riches, and that fett him quite back againe. All theſe haue a kinde of liberty, but 'tis only of the priſon: They walke abroad but 'tis in fetters, or as priſoners in *Rome* vſed to be dealt with, chained to a ſouldier their keeper that doth accompany them to ſee them ſafe returned to their jayle. Now you know that a ſlaue who walkes abroad to doe his maſters buſineſſe, is yet a ſlaue as well as he that is chained in the Gallie. And ſo are theſe ſtill ſervants and bondmen to their corruptions, howeuer they ſeeme for the preſent to be more fauourablie vſed. Thus of the firſt point wherein the maſterly power of ſinne ſtands, *viz.* the reſtraint from doing the good we ſhould, and ſometimes would. Now in the next place ſinne hath alſo.

2. *A power of commanding all bad ſeruices whatſoeuer:* A ſlaue you know muſt ride and runne, drudge and trudge, carry & draw, hew in quarries, digge in the mines, tugge at the oare, labour like horſes in a mill, and be put to all the baſe offices that are to be done. Honourable ſeruices there be that a freeman, a ſonne may be imploied in: but ſervants and ſlaues indure the baſeſt and painfulleſt drudgeries. So is it with a ſinner; he is at the command of his ſinne, as the Aſſe of his driuer, or as the Centurions ſeruants were at their maſters beck. Looke how Satan iuſpires him and his corruption ſuggeſts vnto him, ſo he ſtudies and plots, ſo he invents and practiſes. Be it but one ſinne that raignes over him, you ſhall ſee him euer attendant on that maſter, as bee it luſt, pleaſures, coveteouſneſſe, ambition, he is wholy taken vp in

their imployments. He hath nothing to ſpare from them: no thoughts no words, no time, weeke day and Sabbath day, their buſineſſe ſtill goes on; nay the day is not enough for the doing of its command. He deviſeth miſcheife vpon his bed, and he cannot ſleepe till he haue laid a plot how hee may compaſſe one of his vngodly deſires. He will be profound, crafty, and diligent in contriuing and diſpatching the affaires, which the divell and his corrupt heart haue giuen him in command. For this cauſe is ſinne compared vnto a law. *Rom.* 7. 23. becauſe it commands and rules ouer men by powerfull ſuggeſtions, provoking them to evill. A lawleſſe law it is, but fit for lawleſſe men, it prohibiteth all that good is, and enioynes the practiſe of euery evill thing. And hence alſo is Satan ſtiled the prince of this world, becauſe he hath no meane company at his devotion ouer whom hee rules as vaſſals and ſlaues, moſt ready to obey his will and pleaſure. But will you ſee what imployment ſinne and Satan ſet men about. Are they honorable ſervices? no: the moſt vile, baſe, abſurd, and vnreaſonable offices that can be deviſed, what will not they command, or what will not one of their ſervants doe againſt religion, conſcience, juſtice, common honeſty, yea and nature it ſelfe? Let covetouſneſſe tyrannize ouer him: how baſely niggardly, ſcraping, pinching and ſparing will he be? How moſt vnconſcionably and vnmercifully will he oppreſſe, exact, cozen and deceiue all the world, ſtrangers, acquaintance, rich, poore, friends or foes, Brother, Father, and all that may challenge faire and honeſt dealing? If luſt rule him he will damne his ſoule, deſtroy his body, diſgrace his name, ouerthrow his eſtate, vndoe all his poſterity for the loue of ſome baſe whore. The like may be ſaid of pride, Gluttony and Voluptuouſnes or any ſuch like ſwaggering luſt. Yea to goe farther, the godly many times are here betotted, who to ſatiſfie ſome one vnmaſterly deſire, will hazard the peace and comfort of their ſoules, diſgrace themſelues and their profeſſion, vexe the ſpirit and

and caſt themſelues vpon Gods ſore diſpleaſure. So violent and tyrannicall are theſe commands of ſinne and Satan, and ſo baſe and ſervile are wee growne in our obedience to them, that we wil not ſticke to do that which in the practiſe or event of it tends to our owne vtter vndoing. Now who would not be aſhamed of ſuch a maſter, and ſuch a ſervice? Nay who is not aſhamed of it? But here is the power of darkneſſe and the inviſible tyrannie of Sathan, that whom we hate yet we feare, and ſerue: of whom wee are aſhamed, to him yet we ſhew our ſelues obedient. Thus much touching a ſinners ſubiection vnto the power of ſinne.

Next followes *his ſubiection vnto the puniſhment of it*, which is the ſoreſt part of this bondage which yet a ſinner muſt ſurely beare. He is in this reſpect of all ſlaues the moſt miſerable: for let him looke which way hee will hee can ſee nothing but ſcourges and Scorpions provided for his backe; the whip, the Croſſe, the forke, and ſuch like puniſhments of ſlaues in old time are nothing to the torments hee ſtands in feare of. No ſober houre paſſeth over a ſinners head wherein his heart is not full of ſlauiſh and dreadfull terrors, ariſing from a threefold cauſe.

1 *From Conſcience*, the horrible clamors whereof terrifie his very ſoule, and gripe him to the heart with vnſufferable panges, while it ſtill cries in his eare in this ruefull voice [*yet knowe that for this God ſhall bring thee to iudgment*] oh this makes him quake and grow pale hee is afraid to looke God or men in the face, he ſhifts & faine would if hee could hide his ſinnes from the knowledge of his Conſcience, and both from Gods eye.

2 *From Sathan*, who though hee now ſeeme as his Maſter yet he knowes and trembles to thinke of it that hereafter he muſt be his everlaſting tormentor.

3 *From God himſelfe* whoſe moſt furious wrath and vnavoidable vengence he knowes is prepared for him and ready every moment to ſwallow him for his rebellion. Now who

who could eate his meat merrily that muſt pay ſuch a ſhot? What comforts of this life, what pleaſures of ſinne can be ſweete which are every moment imbittered with ſo many Woes? It helpes not a iot that they be for a time deferred: for he is no freeman who though he be not clapt vp in priſon, yet cannot walke abroad without feare of the Sergeant, the priſon, the gallowes, when the country is laid for him, and executions out for him in euery place. Certainly it is a hell to liue in feare of hell, and as bad as death to liue in *bondage for feare thereof all the daies of a mans life.* Heb. 2.13.

Yet ſuch is the miſerable thraldome of a wicked man, he is every way in the briers, being on the one ſide faſt chained to his ſinfull and vngodly courſes; on the other as ſurely and certainly bound to his everlaſting puniſhmeut. And ſo much for the firſt part of the nature of his ſpirituall bondage wherein it ſtandeth.

2 I goe forward to the next point which I propoſed to your conſideration, *viz. The diverſe degrees of this bondage:* where you are to note that there are two kindes of it. 1. wilfull. 2. vnwilfull ſlauery.

1 *Wilfull bondage*, is when a freeman is content to be made a ſlave, or being by force or fraud made one, is willing to continue one ſtill. Such a one was *Ahab* who *ſold himſelfe* for a ſlaue *to doe wickedly.* 1. *King.* 21.20. I will giue the worth of it, ſaid he to *Naboth*, when he ſought after his vineyard; true, he gaue the full worth of it, that ſold himſelfe for a few acres of land. ſuch are all thoſe that commit ſinne with greedineſſe, who take pleaſure in all vnrighteouſneſſe, who loue the wages of iniquity, who obey ſinne in the luſt thereof, who take thought to fulfill the deſires of the fleſh, with full conſent and hearty good will, giuing vp themſelues to be ruled by the counſells of Satan, and their wicked hearts. In which condition of a wretched ſinner, you man obſerue two things remarkeable.

1 How

1 How ſtrangely baſe and degenerate mans nature is growne, who being a moſt noble creature, made for the moſt honourable purpoſes and ſervices in the world, is now growne ſo vile and extremly baſe, ſo farre forgetfull of his duty and the dignity of his creation, as to be willing inſteed of the free and happy ſervice of God and goodnes, to put himſelfe into a moſt ignominious ſlavery vnto Divels and vile affections. Naturally we all loue liberty and chooſe rather the loſſe of life, then of it, and only violence & fraude can bring vs or keeepe vs in bondage: But ſinne hath prevailed with vs againſt nature and ſo taken off from vs the edge of all vertuous and manly reſolution, that of our owne accord wee offer our ſelues vnto it, being put in fetters and manicles by our owne corruptions, yea this ſlavery men count their only liberty inſomuch that when they be called vnto freedome, haue their ranſome offered them, and all meanes of eſcape laid before them, yet they chooſe to be ſlaues ſtill.

3 How difficult a matter 'tis for a man to come out of this bondage, ſurely he that loues the priſon better then his enlargement its pitty there ſhould be any meanes of his deliuery, and 'tis hazard if they be ſought he will not accept of them. That ſervant who in the ſeventh yeare of his bondage did ſo loue his maſter that he would not goe out free, he was by the law to ſerue his maſter for euer afterwarde *Exod.*21.5. Hee that would not be free when hee might ſhould not afterwards when happely he would. And ſo it is with the ſervants of ſinne when once they beare a good affection to their maſter and are ſo farre bewitched as to hold themſelues well appaid with his ſervice, then are their eares nailed faſt to the poſtes and gates of hell, or rather with Siſera a nayle is ſtriken through their temples and at one ſtroke they looſe both life and liberty for euer. So that vnleſſe that ſtrong man make a foreible reſcue of them out of the hands of theſe tyrants they doe neuer eſcape from

this miſerable thraldome.

2 *Vnwilling bondage*: as when a man is taken priſoner by the ſword in battaile, or circumvented by ſome ſtratagem or fraudulent guile. Such is the condition of Godly men many times who by ſome furious, and vehement aſſault of temptation are wounded, ouerthrowne, taken, led away captiue and clapt vp in irons vnder the guard of ſome ſtrong vnruly luſt, or other, or elſe by ſome ſubtle ſleight and ſnare privily laid for their ſoules haue their heeles intrapped in the ginne, and for a while are caught as a prey for Satan. But now during this ſtraitneſſe, what ſighes and ſorrowes doe poſſeſſe the Godly heart? How tedious and irkſom is this bondage? How doth hee long till his heart bee againe enlarged, that he may runne the race of Gods commandements? Life it ſelfe is vnpleaſant till this liberty be obtained againe. Wherefore many a hearty prayer is ſent vp to Heauen daily to intreat God for his enlargement, willingly doth he embrace all means of freedome, gladly doth hee run and reſt in him that only bringeth deliuerance vnto captiue priſoners. with the Iſraelites in Ægypt he is euen weary of his life for the oppreſſion and cruell tyrannie vnder which he is holden, which makes him in the bitternes of his ſoule cry out vnto God for deliverance from this heavy bondage. Often taking vp that complaint of the Apoſtle *Rom.7.24. (O Wretched man that I am, who ſhall deliuer me from the body of this death)* Theſe are the ſeuerall degrees of this bondage which was the ſecond part propoſed to be handled.

3 I come in the third place to conſider the *greatneſſe and grievouſneſſe of this ſpirituall bondage*; which will appeare by comparing it with outward bodily ſlauery. Now ſpirituall ſlauery is worſe then corporall in three reſpects.

1. *In regard of multitude of Maſters*: In corporall ſeruitude one maſter may haue many ſervants, but for one ſervant to haue two or more maſters is a thing vnreaſonable and vnpoſſible,

poſſible ſuppoſe they were both good; much more if they be bad. Miſerable therefore is the eſtate of a ſinfull man, who whē he ſerues feweſt ſerues three at once, 1 his luſts, 2 Satan working powerfully in his ſinfull corruption, 3 God himſelfe. For the firſt: it may be ſome one wicked affection is his maſter, and yet there is worke enough to pleaſe that, but when many luſts at once beare ſway ouer a man like many tyrants in one Citty, Lord what combats, broyles, and tumults be there in that mans heart: when pride cōmands one thing coueteouſneſſe another, when vncleane luſts draw one way, ambition another, voluptuouſneſſe a third, a man had need then to ſtudy and take thought for the fleſh to fulfill the luſts thereof, and all little enough to pleaſe theſe hard and cruell taskmaſters. Againe he hath another maſter, and
2. that is Satan, who inſpires theſe corrupt affections of mans heart, with much rage and helliſh fierceneſſe, and is that grād Pharaoh who ſetteth all thoſe inferior officers a worke, who therefore is called the *(ſpirit that worketh in the Children of diſobedience) Epheſ.* 2,2. Over whom although he alone may ſeeme to challenge all power and autority as ouer the only ſubiects of his kingdome, yet wee know that beſides both theſe they haue another ſupreame and ſoveraigne Lord (1) God himſelfe, againſt whoſe gouernement although they doe rebell, yet can they not withdraw themſelues from vnder his power and juriſdiction. *God is King let the earth be neuer ſo vnquiet, and the haters of the Lord ſhall be ſubiect vnto him.* He will haue to doe with them in ſpite of their hearts. They feare him as ſlaues againſt their wills, both to do his will whilſt he vſeth them to effect by them his owne moſt holy purpoſes, and alſo to ſuffer his will in their iuſtly deſerued puniſhment. Thus wicked men are maſtered on all hands, and no way free either from ſin or puniſhment.

2 *In regard of the means of eſcape*: a ſervant hardly vſed may finde meanes to ſhift himſelfe of his Maſter; It is not ſo

with a ſinner; runne away from his maſter he cannot; for he beares him alwaies about with him in his boſome, his ſinne ſtill keepes him company, and goe he whether he will Satan dogges him, ſtands at his right hand, nay poſſeſſeth his very heart, ſo plying him with temptations and ill ſuggeſtions, that he cannot goe a foot from his ſervice. 'Tis true the caſe is ſo ſometimes with a wicked man that he changeth his maſter, but ſeildome comes a better. If he eſcape the tyranny of one ſinfull affection, he falls vnder the command and power of another as bad. So you ſhall haue a very ſpend-thrift turne a miſerable niggard: but this is only like a priſoner that remoues his bolt from one legge to another, and ſuch exchange is done only vpon compact: He leaues one vice that he may the more freely giue himſelfe to another; ſo that he changes his maſter but not his ſervile condition. Some raigning ſinne or other will alwaies cleaue to his ſoule, lie downe with him in his graue, and ſinke him downe to Hell. And as for the eye of Gods revenging iuſtice he ſees it open vpon him to take notice of his doings, and his hand alwaies lifted vp to ſmite him, trembling alwaies to thinke that he hath no means to hide his ſinne from Gods knowledge, no power to prevent, no ſtrength to beare the heavy ſtroke of his wrath when it ſhall light vpon him.

3 *In reſpect of the reward*, the world hath ſcarce afforded maſters ſo without all humanity, Tyrannicall and cruell, as not to be pleaſed with the faithfull ſeruice of a ſlaue, or not to reward him in ſome degree of curteſie for his ſeruice. A ſinner is miſerable both waies as he cannot pleaſe his maſter, ſo he cannot hope for a reward. For take a man that hath quite ſpent himſelfe in the ſeruice of ſome one of theſe imperiall and cruell Lords, who hath done all that he can in giuing full content and ſatisfaction vnto them, yet they reſt not, there are yet new commands and further injunctions, ſo that when it ſeemed, villany was come to the height, and that mens witts and ſtrengthes did faile them for further

plots,

plots and practiſes; there's yet a powder-plot behinde, ſome new, ſtrange, vnthought of piece of bad ſeruice to be performed. Sinne and Satan are reſtleſſe and mercileſſe, tyrants never contented, ſtill exacting, crying, craving, compelling to new tributes and homages. And now when a man hath worne out himſelfe in their ſervice, ſpent his yeares and ſtrength, his wealth and good name, and body and ſoule, and all vpon them, what is then his reward for this his truſty and true ſervice? A courteſy thinke you? Nay a very hell of vnkindneſſe, ſhame, reproach, miſery, and many other puniſhments even in this life, but for that other, Hell, damnation, fire, ſnares, and brimſtone, and ſtormy tempeſts of Gods furious indignation: this is their portion and the guerdon of their obedience. Satan did for a while promiſe faire and performe little, helping them to enioy ſome pleaſures of ſin for a ſeaſon; but this ſeeming kindneſſe was but coloured cruelty, all being nothing but a ſweet ſauce to make him ſwallow downe thoſe morſels of poyſon, the fierie venome whereof ſhall afterwards drinke vp his ſpirit, and inflame his ſoule with everlaſting burning.

Fooliſh men and vnwiſe that take ſuch paines to be miſerable; But how ſhould it be otherwiſe, when men are ſervants to Satan, but rebels againſt God? In vaine doe they expect any other reward for their ſervice, then the ſevereſt puniſhment of their rebellion.

Thus I haue opened vnto you according as I haue beene able, the nature, degrees, and quality of this ſpiritual bondage of ſinne. It remaineth now to make ſome vſe and application of that which hath beene deliuered.

The *firſt vſe* ſhalbe for the diſcouery of a great errour in the world committed by men, in iudging their owne and other mens conditions. It is the common opinion of moſt, that if a man liue out of danger of law, and haue wherewith to pay every man and keepe him out of debt and feare of the priſon, if he can liue vpon his owne and be beholding to *Vſe*, 1.

no man, if he can ſet his foot to the beſt mans in the pariſh, and be able to make his part good in any ſuit or quarrell, caring as little for ſuch a great man, as the great man cares for him, if he can ouer-beare his enimies, and trample vpon any that he takes againſt; if he can goe whether he liſts & do what he pleaſeth, liuing idlely in pleaſures vpon other mens labours; if he be able to ſinne boldly, to ſatisfy any diſordred affection without controule, hauing power in his hand to overcome a poore Miniſter, that he ſhall not dare to reproue him, or money enough in his purſe to out-bribe the authoritie & ſeverity of the law, ſuch a man as this that liues without feare or care, hee is eſteemed the onely man that leads a free life, and liues at his own command. Thus men iudge of others and of themſelues, whilſt they looke no farther then that which is outward, appearing to ſenſe: But they muſt knowe that every freeman in a civill eſtate, is not a free ſubject of Gods kingdome; No: there be that feed daintily, lie ſoft, goe richly clad, liue lazily, and who take their fill of worldly pleaſures in all licentiouſneſſe, who yet are as arrant ſlaues as any that ſerue in a Gally. Doe but turne their inſide outward, and you ſhall ſee ever whole legions of Divels domineering ouer them, pride, couetouſneſſe, ambition, envie, malice, vncleane deſires, with a number of ſuch like blacke and helliſh luſts raigning in their ſoules, vnder the command whereof they are haled this way and that, in all ſeruile obedience euen like ſlaues bought and ſolde in a market. A vaine thing 'tis for theſe men to bragge of their nobility, gentrie, of the freedome and ingeniouſneſſe of their education or liuing. For let them knowe that a mans honor is his honeſtie and ſanctity; his perfect freedome is the faithfull ſervice of his God. Hee is truly free, gentle, and noble, thats truly gracious. Swearing, lying, gaming, whoring, covetouſneſſe, gaping after a few pounds of Gold and Silver, fooliſh loue of gay apparell, reſtleſſe purſute after two or three words and titles of honour, with the like; are theſe the

im-

imployments of a braue, free, generous, and noble ſpirit? Farre be it from any man to thinke ſo, ſeruile and baſe diſpoſitions they bee that ſubiect themſelues to ſuch wicked, and vnworthy affections, nor can any bee honeſt, or honorable who hath ſuch maſters. This the Apoſtle concludes, *Rom.6.20.*[*When yee were the ſervants of ſinne, yee were free from righteouſneſſe,*] And it muſt needs be a baſe and diſhoneſt ſervice wherein 'tis free to be, and to doe any thing ſaving that which is honeſt and righteous. Wherefore let no man fall into the error of the Iewes here noted in this text, boaſting much of their freedome and dignitie, becauſe they were borne of *Abraham*, & liued not in bodily ſervitude, leſt they heare alſo that which Chriſt here replied vpon theſe Iewes (*who ſo committeth ſinne is the ſervant of ſinne*) and againe (*if we were Abrahams Children, yee would doe the workes of Abraham*) *verſ.*39. But now (*yee are of your Father the Divell becauſe the luſts of your Father yee will doe*) *verſe* 42.

2 The ſecond vſe of this point ſhall be for admonition, *Vſe.2.* that each one doe make triall of his eſtate, whether he be the ſeruant of ſinne yea or no? For which purpoſe the Apoſtle hath ſet vs downe a golden rule, *Rom. 6,16.* (*knowe yee not that to whomſoeuer yee giue your ſelues as ſervants to obey, his ſervants yee are to whom yee obey, whether it bee of ſinne vnto death, or of obedience vnto righteouſneſſe.*) 'Tis not the Liverie or Cognizance of Baptiſme, 'tis not the name of Chriſtian, 'tis not the outward profeſſion of religion that makes a diſtinction betweene the ſervants of God, and of ſinne. We haue a fairer marke to knowe them by, and that is Obedience. This tels vs certainly to whom they belong. He that obeyes God he is Gods ſervant, he that obeyes ſinne, let him proteſt or profeſſe neuer ſo much devotion to Gods ſervice, yet he is for all that the ſeruant of ſinne and no better. Well then the triall is now eaſie, and requires no more but this, that you bring your thoughts home to your ſelues, duly

duely considering whom you doe vsually service vnto, whether God in obeying his holy commandements, or your owne sinfull flesh and Satan in following their counsells.

Doest thou in thy heart serue the law of God, consenting to all the commands thereof as most good and holy, endeavouring as much as possibly thou art able to doe whatsoever it biddeth thee, holding a constant resolution to please God in all things whatsoeuer? If thy conscience can truely say yea, then maist thou reioyce in the honourable title of being the servant of God. On the other side, dost thou commit sinne as our Sauiour speaks here, that is, dost thou willingly aud ordinarily, make a practise of breaking Gods holy law, following every lewd course that Satan leads thee to, and giuing scope to thy vngodly desires? Yea is there any one particular sinne that raignes ouer thee, wherein thou liuest wittingly and wilfully however thou forsake others? If thy conscience say yea, then knowe that as yet thou art a miserable bondman and servant vnto corruption, hearken therefore in the last place to

Vse, 3. 3 The third vse wherewith I will conclude this point, and that is an exhortation to perswade those that finde themselues in bondage vnto sinne to endeavour by all meanes to get themselues at liberty. To men in prison or bodily servitude, this exhortation were needlesse; but vnto the servants of sinne, 'tis most necessary to vse all perswasions to make themselues freemen. Two motiues there are that ordinarily prevaile with all men, to seeke for a change of their present condition, *viz:* 1. The evill of the present estate in which they are. 2. The good of another whereto they may come: both are seriously to bee thought on in this businesse, forasmuch as there is no estate worse then the slavery of sin and punishment: nor any better then the liberty of grace and glory. Wherefore let me earnestly entreat you to bend your meditations vpon these two points. First thinke with your selues how miserable a thing it is, for a man to liue all daies

daies of his life, like a ſlaue and dye like a villaine, how wofull is the caſe of that poore creature, which is at the command of every baſe affection led and driuen hither and thither, according as euery wicked deſire and helliſh inſpiration ſhall provoke it, wearying it ſelfe in the waies of wickedneſſe, and taking a great deale of paines to worke out its owne everlaſting miſerie. Thinke what ſtrange folly it is for a man to content himſelfe with a few poore commodities & pleaſures, that ſinne can afford for a day or two, the very enjoying whereof doe but make him more vnhappy: No man that is wiſe would buy the greateſt of ſuch contentments, for one of the panges of an ill conſcience, which accompanie them. The time comes on when he muſt part with all his delights, and be turn'd out of the world naked of all comfort, grace and favour. This is it which cuts him to the heart, and one ſerious thought of it quite daſheth all his jollity and contentment, Feares are vpon him on euery ſide, making him to liue vncomfortable becauſe he knowes he ſhall dye vnhappily. But now turne our thoughts on the other ſide, and conſider how happy and glorious the condition of the Saints is, whom God by his grace hath ſet at liberty, from the ſervice of ſinne. Whether you looke vpon them here in this life in the eſtate of grace, or hereafter in the eſtate of glory, their freedome is euery way bleſſed and deſireable. Free they are from the commanding power of ſin, being now led by the ſpirit of Chriſt, and not by the ſpirit of the Diuell: free from the terrors of an evill conſcience: free from the terrors of death, hell, & iudgement: free vnto every noble imploiment in Gods ſervice, apt to pray much, readie to heare much, able to meditate much, delighting in ſanctifying the Sabbath, chearefull, forward and willing hearted to euery good worke. A bleſſed eſtate if wee haue either grace or witte to iudge right of it. I confeſſe graceleſſe fooles haue another eſteeme of it: Tell them of praying, reading the word of God, ſinging of Pſalmes, hearing and

repeating of Sermons, and keeping of the Sabbath ye kill them dead & rather they had you ſhould ſet them to any the painfulleſt drudgerie in the world: Councell them to reſtraine gaming, drinking and ill company, to bridle their vngodly and naughty affections, to converſe with ſuch and ſuch men of godly and religious liues, and to be content to be ruled by reaſon of Gods word. All this is euen as much as if you ſhould put them in the ſtockes, or clap a paire of fetters on their heeles. Let them liue in a family where all exerciſes of religion are ſtrictly obſerued, and no liberty giuen to any lewd practiſe, they are as weary of it as a priſoner of the Iayle, or one that is in little eaſe, and they think it ſeauen yeares till they be gone to ſome other place, where they may liue as they liſt. Thus men of perverſe minds, and corrupt iudgements cenſure Gods ſervice to be no better then a ſad, dull, weariſome, and ſlauiſh drudgerie. Vngodly men, that thinke ther's no mirth but in madneſſe; no ſport but in doing miſchiefe; no contentment but in pleaſing the Divell and wicked luſts, no liberty at all but in licentiouſneſſe of liuing. Be (Ibeſeech you) better informed, and know that a ſubiect is a free man though hee ſerues his Prince and obey his lawes: A Sonne is a freeman although he liue in feare and aw of his parents: A ſervant is a freeman though he liue in conformity to the lawes of a Chriſtian maſter, and the orders of a Chriſtian family. And ſo a Chriſtian man is then free, yea moſt free when he ſubmits himſelfe to the lawes of God, as an obedient ſubiect of his kingdome. This freedome he enioyes in part in this life, but fully in the world to come, when he ſhall be perfectly freed from all ſinne and miſerie; when there ſhall be no feare of being vnhappy, becauſe no poſſibility of being ſinfull. Certainly my Brethren, if there be in vs any ſenſe of our preſent miſery, or expectation of the future happineſſe of the Saints, we cannot chooſe but ſigh within our ſelues with many prayers, wiſhes, and long deſires, that wee alſo

ſo may *be deliuered from the bondage of corruption, into this glorious Libberty of the ſonnes of God.*

If now (for concluſion of all) you aske me by what meanes this freedome may be obtained; I anſwere briefly, there is no meanes but one, and that is Ieſus Chriſt. All the Liberty wee haue is his purchaſe and from his gift, for as you haue heard, wee are bondſlaues vnto ſin, partly in regard of the puniſhment of it, partly in regard of the ouer-ruling power thereof. Now 'tis Chriſt that ſets vs at liberty from both. Chriſt by his blood purgeth vs from all our ſinnes, by taking the guilt and puniſhment thereof from vs. Chriſt by his ſpirit deliuers vs from the power and dominion of ſinne, that it raigne not in our mortall bodies, hauing ſanctified vs by ſending the holy Ghoſt into our hearts. For (*where the ſpirit of the Lord is there is liberty*) as the Apoſtle ſpeaks, 2. *Cor.* 3. 17. So that euery way Chriſt is he that beſtowes on vs our Manu-miſſion, according as he himſelfe here ſpeaketh (*if that the ſonne ſhall make you free, then are you free indeed*) wherefore this only remaines that we ſhould goe vnto Chriſt, ſeeke and ſue vnto him for our enlargment, intreat him to heare the crie of a priſoner and captiue, and in compaſſion of thee to afford his helping hand for thy deliuery. Pray him to put himſelfe betweene Gods wrath and thy ſoule, making peace for thee in heauen, by his bloody and meritorious ſacrifice, pray him to ſend forth into thine heart, the ſpirit of ſanctification, to regenerate and renew all the powers of ſoule and body, freeing them from that law of ſinne which naturally is in thy members, that by the power of that inward grace, thou maiſt be able thenceforth to giue vp thy ſoule and body vnto God, as ſeruants of righteouſneſſe and holineſſe. Confeſſe to him and ſay: *O Lord other Lords beſides thee haue ruled ouer mee*, who haue robbed me of all grace, peace, comfort, happineſſe, honour and libertie, long haue I liued in grieuous thraldome, miſerably oppreſſed and ſtreightned on every ſide, Satan, the world,

the affections of ſin haue plaid the vnmercifull tyrants ouer me, I haue beene wholy at their command, thinking ſpeaking and doing euery wicked thing they haue ſuggeſted vnto me, when I would doe any good, euill is preſent with mee and aboue me, and I am hedged with ſuch a world of encumbrances that I cannot tell which way to get out. Now Lord helpe me, breake theſe my bonds, vnlooſe theſe cords wherewith I am tyed, free me from this ſtreightneſſe, and bring my ſoule out into a large place. Vndoe the works of the Diuell, reſtraine his power, deſtroy his kingdome, and vtterly ouerthrow the dominion of ſinne within mee. Be thou my Lord and King, and doe thou rule ouer me, let thy word command me, thy ſpirit lead me, thy power incline me to all ſubiection vnto thee. Bid me doe what thou pleaſeſt, and make mee doe it, forbid me what thou diſlikeſt, and keepe me from doing it, perſwade me by faire meanes, and if ſtubborne force me by foule, exerciſe ouer me all the authority of a Father, of a Maſter, of a King, of a God. I ſubmit me to all and am content by any meanes to be ouerruled, ſo I may become a faithfull ſeruant in thy houſe, and an obedient ſubiect of thy kingdome. This my ſeruice is my freedome, this freedome is my happineſſe, and for mee to be thus free and happy is thine honour. Now therefore take vnto thee the glory of all, and accept of my ſervice who haſt purchaſed my liberty: vnto thee O Chriſt I owe my ſoule, much more my obedience, I yeeld thee both and all that I haue or can doe, take all, command all, protect, ſanctifie and ſaue all.

FINIS.



HOSEA. 4. 6.

My people are deſtroyed for lacke of knowledge: becauſe thou haſt reiected knowledge, I will alſo reiect thee, that thou ſhalt be no Prieſt to me; ſeeing thou haſt forgotten the law of thy God, I will alſo forget thy children.

THeſe words containe a ſhort declaration of the miſerable eſtate of the Church of Iſrael in the daies of the holy Prophet, when the people they were ignorant, the Prieſts they were negligent, both were growne monſtrouſly wicked, and all were likely to be out of hand moſt ſeverely puniſhed.

The parts of this verſe are two.

1 The ſinne and puniſhment of the people; their ſinne is ignorance, want of knowledge of God, his worſhip and ſervice; their puniſhment is deſtruction, or cutting off: partly by temporall iudgments the Sword, Peſtilence, Famine and Captivity; which for their ignorance with other ſinnes ſhould come vpon them; partly by ſpirituall and eternall iudgments in their certaine condemnation in Hell fire.

[*My people are deſtroyed for lacke of knowledg.*]

2 The ſinnes and puniſhment of the Prieſts who are in the next place particularly queſtioned as chiefe authors of that ignorance which was among the people: their ſinne is, that: *They reiected knowledge and forgot the law of their God:* The latter clauſe giues vs the meaning of the former: The law that was preſcribed vnto the Prieſts the ſonnes of *Levi* is expreſſed, Deut. 33. 10. [*They ſhall teach Iacob thy iudgments and Iſraell thy Law*] and yet more fully, Mal. 2. 7. (*The Prieſts lippes ſhould preſerue knowledge and they ſhould ſeeke the law at his mouth, for he is the meſſenger of the Lord of Hoſts.*) This then was the covenant that God had made with the ſonnes of *Levi*; that beſides the offering vp of ſacrifices for the people; he ſhould provide for the inſtruction of the people in matters of religion: for which purpoſe they are enioyned. 1. To haue the knowledge of Gods will for themſelues, that the law of God might be ſought at their mouth and knowledge preſerved in their lips. 2. To bee ready and carefull to teach the ſame vnto the people; ſo farre as concerned their duty to knowe and practiſe. Now at this time theſe Prieſts *had forgotten*. i.e. broken *the covenant of Levi*; and tranſgreſſed the commandement which God of old had given to the Prieſthood: being guilty of a double fault.

1. Ignorance that they were not themſelues men of knowledge, ſuch as were skilfull and learned in the vnderſtanding of the law able to informe others: but were as the Phariſes and Scribes in after times, *Blind leaders of the blinde.*

2. Negligence that they tooke no care in teaching the poore ignorant people according as they were bound by their office: Both theſe faults are ſignified vnto vs when the Prophet ſaith (*That the Prieſts had reiected knowledge,*) meaning that they were ignorant themſelues, and negligent towards others: They had no knowledge for their owne part, or if any, yet they deſpiſed to teach it to others. A fault

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no way to be tolerated in ſuch men: & therefore in the next place you haue their puniſhment; which is conformable to their ſinne: They would not doe their dutie, God would diſcharge them of their office; *they reiected knowledge* with ſcorne and loathing of it, (ſo the word is מאס) God with as much diſdaine *reiects them from being Prieſts vnto him: They had forgotten Gods law, God would likewiſe forget them and their poſterity*, leauing them without reliefe when their deſerued ſhame and miſery ſhould come vpon them. Which fell out accordingly at the finall deſtruction of the kingdome of Iſraell, when Prieſts and people fared alike and were all carried away into perpetuall captivitie; where they and their poſterity remained ever.

The words being thus in briefe opened to you, out of them I commend to your obſervation this generall point of inſtruction, *viz:*

Ignorance in matters of religion, be it in whomſoever, is a hatefull and dangerous ſinne. *Doctr.*

If it bee in people 'tis naught, if in Miniſters 'tis much worſe, in whomſoeuer it bee 'tis a ſinne wherewith God is highly diſpleaſed and which he will one day ſeuerely puniſh. That the truth of this may appeare vnto you I ſhall endeavour to vnfold vnto you the Quality and Danger of this ſinne a little more at large: becauſe as ignorance is a common fault, ſo men haue a common opinion that it is a very ſmall offence, ſcarce any at all, You will iudge otherwiſe, if you will duly conſider of it in theſe three reſpects.

1. *The Nature of it.*
2. *The Cauſes of it.*
3. *The Effects of it.*

1. For the nature of it you muſt knowe that ignorance is a foule blemiſh of mans nature; a want of that perfection which ſhould be in vs, if matters were now with vs, as when God created vs, we were made after Gods image, and a ſingular part of that Image was our knowledge, and the moſt

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excellent part of our knowledge was the vnderſtanding of all divine matters touching God and goodneſſe, ſo far forth as it was needfull for vs to vnderſtand them. Now nature it ſelfe that hath planted in every one an vnmeaſurable deſire of knowing much, leades vs alſo to iudge how incomparable an ornament it is, where it may be attained.

When wee thinke vpon the infinite knowledge of God, or vpon that excellent meaſure of knowledge in the Angels and bleſſed Saints departed, or in *Adam* in his innocencie, none is ſo ſtupid, and dull, as not to admire it in them and to wiſh for the like in himſelfe, ſo farre as he might be capable of it. In which caſe when wee looke backe from them to our ſelues, who can chooſe, but hang downe his head for very ſhame and griefe to ſee God, and theſe bleſſed creatures inhabiting in ſo glorious a brightneſſe and lightſomeneſſe whileſt himſelfe dwels in darknes compaſſed about with a blacke night of ignorance, errour, and obſcurity: He ſeeth as much difference betweene himſelfe and them, as betweene him that travailes by the cleare ſunne-ſhine and one that walkes by a candle. Knowledge is like the ſunne in the world, or the eie in a mans face: nothing would be more ruſull, and diſmall then the world without the light of the ſun, nor is any deformity in the face more notable then the want of an eye: And certainely there is nothing more vgly to behold, then that ſoule which is darkned in its vnderſtanding through blindneſſe and ignorance, being deſtitute of the knowledge of God, of Chriſt, of grace, of Religion; the knowledge whereof is both light, and life vnto the ſoule.

2 In the next place let vs conſider the cauſes of mans ignorance, and they are two, both very bad according as the effect.

1 The firſt is *Adams* ſinne from whoſe fall this naturall corruption and weakneſſe is derived vnto vs. Hee ſinned, and we in him: both are puniſhed among other great loſſes, with the loſſe of thoſe glorious abilities of our vnderſtanding

ding part. It had once a power and large capacity to comprehend all things both naturall and divine: but at this time a very great weakneſſe and dimneſſe of ſight is fallen vpon it in diſcerning naturall things: and for the knowledge of God and ſpirituall things it is growne even ſtarke blinde. Hence then is that firſt kinde of ignorance which wee may call *naturall and invincible*. *Naturall*, becauſe every ſonne of *Adam* brings it with him into the world by the courſe of his generation and birth: foraſmuch as every one is borne weake-ſighted with this infirmity and diſability in his vnderſtanding. Therefore in infants there is more then *ignorantia puræ negationis*: for being ſinnefull, ignorance is a part of their originall corruption, and ſo 'tis alſo, *pravæ diſpoſitionis*, they not only know not by reaſon of age; but are ill diſpoſed to knowe by reaſon of the diſability of their ſinfull nature. Againe this ignorance is termed *invincible*, or vnavoidable, becauſe the naturall man alwaies continues in it, and cannot by his owne ſtrength ever get out of it: but onely by the help of Gods ſpirit outwardly affording the meanes of holy knowledge and inwardly enlightning the minde to vnderſtand them aright as the Apoſtle ſheweth. 2. *Cor.* 3. 18.

2. Our owne ſinne, *viz*: wilfull rebellion in neglecting and deſpiſing all holy meanes of knowledge: when meanes are not they ſeeke not after them, when they be offered, they refuſe them, or vſe them with all careleſneſſe and diſreſpect: when men winke againſt the light, cloſing vp their eyes that it may not ſhine in their hearts: when they will none of wiſdomes inſtructions, but ſtubbornely ſay to God, *depart from vs, for wee deſire not the knowledge of thy waies*. Hence is that other kinde of ignorance which wee call, *affected*, a fouler fault by farre then the former: when men know nothing and yet ſcorne to learne any thing: they will not heare, nor conferre, nor read, nor pray, nor vſe any meanes to get knowledge, but are content to ſit ſtill in darkneſſe

neſſe, as the Egyptians were ſometimes forced to doe, not ſtriuing one way or other, A miſerable condition, but I ſhall tell you the reaſon of it: they abide in darkneſſe, becauſe they are loath to ſee and to be ſeene. Should they come abroad in the light, their manifold deformities and abominable corruptions would bee diſcouered by the light of the word to their ſhame and griefe: they ſhould meet with many reproofes of their lewd courſes, many perſwaſions to piety and obedience: all which they can by no meanes endure; it is death to them to heare of their faults, when they are reſolued not to amend them: and they will bee wilfully ignorant of that, which being once knowne would often trouble their conſciences. This reaſon of mans wilfull affected ignorance, Chriſt giues, *Ioh.* 3. 19. 20. [*Light came into the world, and men loued darkneſſe rather then light, becauſe their deeds were evill: for every man that evill doth, hates the light, neither commeth to the light leaſt his deeds ſhould be reproued.*] Theſe are the cauſes of this ignorance, originall corruption diſabling vs to knowe, actuall ſtubborneſſe and frowardneſſe, making vs vnwilling to knowe: wherefore ignorance muſt needs be ill, that hath ſo ill cauſes, where the root is rottenneſſe, you can looke for no fruit but corruption.

3. Come we in the third place to the effects of it and you ſhall ſee it is evill and hurtfull in that regard alſo. The fruits of ignorance are two. 1. Sinne. 2. Puniſhment. 1. Sinne. Ignorance is a ſinne it ſelfe and it is a cauſe of many ſinnes: There be mother ſinnes and this is one of them, a fruitfull mother not of devotion, as blinde Papiſts would haue vs believe, but of iniquitie and impietie. An ignorant man is a wicked man; an ignorant Prieſt is a wicked Prieſt, an ignorant people a ſinnefull people. 'Tis plaine by this very Chapter, (*There is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land*) ſaith the Prophet, *ver.* 1. What followes thence, why this (*by ſwearing and lying, and killing, and ſtealing*

ling, and committing adultery they breake out and blood toucheth blood, verſ. 2. Againe, (*Iſrael doth not knowe, my people doth not conſider,* (ſaith the Prophet *Iſaiah, Chapt.* 1. *v.* 3. what of that, they might yet bee devout, and holy might they not? No: read the complaint that followes thereupon, *verſe* 3. (*Ah ſinnefull nation, a people laden with iniquitie; a ſeed of evill doers, children that are corrupters, they haue forſaken the Lord, they haue provoked the holy one of Iſrael, they are gone away backward.*) See the fruits of ignorance whereby men become Apoſtates from God, wicked in themſelues, and corrupters of others: for ſo it is, they that knowe no good themſelues haue yet knowledge enough to teach another to doe evill. Nor can this bee otherwiſe: for as much as where the heart is evill, the life will be wicked. Now an ignorant perſon is devoide of grace. So ſaith the Apoſtle touching the Gentiles, that they were (*ſtrangers from the life of God through the ignorance that was in them, becauſe of the blindneſſe of their hearts, Eph.* 4. 8.) that is, they were deſtitute of all ſauing and quickning power of Gods ſpirit, they had no grace, no faith, no feare, no loue, no true affection to God or any ſpirituall goodneſſe; they had neither care nor deſire of that they knew not: whence *ver.* 19. followes immediatly their lewd liues in that (*being without ſenſe* (of goodneſſe) *they gaue themſelues vnto wantonneſſe, to worke all vncleaneſſe even with greedineſſe.*) For what will not a graceleſſe ignorant man doe, who knowes not, but he may doe any thing? He is blinde and cannot chooſe but ſtumble at every blocke, daſh himſelfe againſt every poſt, tumble into every ditch: he is a ſhip without a Maſter that runnes at adventure with any winde, vpon any rocke or ſhelfe. It is Chriſts compariſon, *Ioh.* 12. 35. (*Hee that walketh in the darke knoweth not whether he goeth*) and ſo is an ignorant man, he travels in the night: hee cannot ſee his way before him, he miſſeth at every turning, hee muſt leape hedge and ditch, & yet ſtill the farther he goeth, the more he wanders.

No good worke he takes in hand but hee failes ſtrangely in the performance, in every courſe of his life hee goeth aſtray through his great folly, and before he is aware runnes vpon a thouſand ſnares and temptations the Divell hath ſet for to take him. You ſee then ignorance is an occaſion of many ſinnes: but in particular let mee giue you warning of two ſpeciall faults that ignorant men vſually runne into. 1. Inconſtancie in religion whether it bee in opinion or practi'e, for when men take vpon them the profeſſion of religion, believing, and practiſing many things, but are not able to giue an account of their faith, nor tell any ſound reaſon why, vpon what grounds, to what end they doe ſuch and ſuch things: can it be expected, but that if theſe bee ſtrongly ſet vpon and put to it indeed, they will bee drawne without much adoe to change their mindes? We knowe what the Apoſtle ſpeakes of *thoſe ſilly women, who were alwaies learning, and yet never came to the knowledge of the truth*: They were the fitteſt to become a prey vnto falſe teachers and deceivers, who *creeping into their houſes* & hearts, by cunning inſinuations deluded them, and *led them captiue* to any erroneous opinion or practiſe. 2. *Tim.* 3. 6. 7. Among vs, my brethren, in theſe times wee haue to blame men as well as women for this fault. The intolerable ignorance of moſt is ſufficient witneſſe to all the world, that there are not a few whoſe religion is yet to chooſe, and for ought they knowe to the contrary, another may be as good as that which they profeſſe for the preſent, they bee Proteſtants in ſhew, but they know as little what belongs to true religion as they doe of Popery: They bee no more able to diſtinguiſh betweene tru: religion and falſe, then an infant betweene the right hand and the left. And therefore if at any time a Prieſt or Ieſuite, or other cunning Papiſt ſet vpon them, they are ſtraight way puzzled and ſtaggered: they haue nothing to anſwere in defence of their religion, but you ſhall ſee them preſently fetch't ouer with fine words, and halfe perſwaded

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to be of another opinion: yea did not ciuill reſpects & temporall incõueniences beate them off from popery more then the knowledge or hatred of ſuch errors as Papiſts maintaine, there is nothing could keepe them in that caſe from revolting vnto their ſide.

It is a needfull point, my brethren, to be thought on by vs & that ſeriouſly, eſpecially in theſe euill daies, wherein Satan and his complices doe on all hands aſſault the Church of God, ſeeking to ſwallow her vp. Our brethren abroad are in ſore affliction, yet they forſake not their God; let's pitty them, and pray for them, that they may continue faithfull even to the death, for our ſelues at home, God he knows we are as ſinfull a people and haue deſerued as ſharpe a triall as our neighbours, let vs pray ſtill for the life and ſafety of our King, the peace of our Church, the welfare of our ſtate, and let each one looke to his owne particular walking in the light, whileſt wee haue the light getting knowledg & wiſedome, & faith, & zeale, that we may ſtãd faſt in the profeſſion of Gods true religiõ, whatſoeuer danger may betide vs. This of the firſt fault of ignorant men. The ſecond followes.

2. Security or ſenſleſneſſe in regard of ſinne or puniſhment. An ignorant perſon knowes not what it is to ſinne, and therefore dares commit it, hee apprehends not what puniſhments belong to ſinne, and therefore hee makes no ſcruple of them: hee ſees no danger before it comes: and ſo he feares it not: when puniſhment coms vpon him he knowes not why or from whom it comes, 'tis with him as with Ephraim, Hoſ. 7. 9. (*Strangers haue deuoured his ſtrength and he knowes it not: yea gray haires are here & there vpon him, yet he knowes not*) many markes of Gods anger are vpon him, yet he knowes and apprehends not by whom or wherfore he is ſmitten. You ſhall haue many a man pine away in his eſtate, vnbleſt and vnthriving in all his buſineſſes, croſt with vngratious and diſobedient Children, vext with euill ſervants and vnfaithfull, troubled with an vnquiet and diſcontented family, tormented with vniuſt ſutes in law,

ſlandered in his good name by falſe reports raiſed of him, yea diſquieted in his ſoule with griefes and feares: yet mark this man in all his vexations, & you ſee him ſenſible of nothing but preſent paines: he thinkes of nothing leſſe then of Gods hand and his owne ſinne in all this: God ſmites him for his coveteouſneſſe, vncleaneneſſe, prophanenes, vnbeleife, Atheiſme with the like notorious ſinnes he liues in: but the ignorant wretch neuer conſiders of this, nor doth he any iot the more either turne to God that puniſheth him, or from his ſinnes for which he is puniſhed: he toiles and moiles, rides and runnes vp and downe, tries now this way then that, entreats one, bribes another, after all complaines of his hard fortune and ill ſucceſſe in all his affaires. And yet ſee in the middle of all this trouble he ſinnes as much as euer hee did, he ſweares, he drinkes, and coſens his neighbour as much as euer; he is as irreligious as he was before, not any dutie of religion performed by himſelfe or with his family more then at another time. No; he keepes his old wont & ventures on ſtill in his evill courſes, hoping that times may change & matters amend one day. If he can but make any ſhift to eſcape the preſent ſmart; that is all that he lookes after. Thus is the condition of many ſoules, who doe euill and are plagued yet doe euill ſtill: becauſe they be beſotted, & haue not the wiſdome to ſee their ſinne, or feare their puniſhment.

Thus much of the firſt effect of ignorance *viz.* ſinne, the ſecond followes.

2 Puniſhment: (*my people periſh*) which is partly in this life, partly in that which is to come. In this life God often plagues them and puts them to ſhame. This was one cauſe of the captivity of the Iewes as it is *Eſay* 5. 13. (*therefore my people is gone into captivity, becauſe they had no knowledg*)

They ſeildome eſcape here: but hereafter they are ſure to ſmart for it. Ignorance is the highway to hell: and ignorant men, though they cannot chooſe but wander, yet they cannot goe ſo farre wide as to miſſe hell. It is the Apoſtles ſentence

tence 2.*Theſſ.*1.8. Chriſt ſhall ſhew himſelfe (*in flaming fire, rendring vengance vnto them that doe not know God.&c.*) God will be ſtrange to them in that day, who are now ſtrangers vnto him. He will not know them then, who will none of his acquaintance now: they ſay to him, *depart from vs we will not know thee*, he ſhall then ſay to them, *depart frõ me, I know you not:* they that know not Gods waies, ſhall never enter into his reſt, they liue and dye without his feare & out of his favour. Thoſe that are blind will certainly fall into the ditch, as it is *Math.*15.14. except God doe in time open their eyes, to ſee the danger and prevent it.

Theſe things thus explained, before we come to make application of the point; it will not be amiſſe in our paſſage, to touch briefly vpon two queſtions needfull to be reſolved. The firſt is.

1 *Whether ignorance of a mans duty, doe in any ſort excuſe his not doing of it.*

To this I anſwere in briefe: Ignorance in thoſe things we are bound to know doth not excuſe a fault committed by reaſon of it. The reaſon is manifeſt, becauſe one ſinne cannot excuſe another. Now in this caſe it is firſt a ſinne not to know our duty, becauſe we were bound to know it: and then it is a ſinne not to doe our duty, becauſe we alſo ought to haue done it. And though wee are ſo farre from being excuſed, that wee are in a double fault, and deſerue double blame, for being ignorant and diſobedient; nevertheleſſe this muſt be obſerued; that a ſinne committed through ſimple ignorance is not ſo great a fault as that which is committed through wilfull ignorance or againſt knowledge. He that ſinnes againſt his knowledge is a notorious and preſumptuous offender and deſerves ſevereſt puniſhment according to that of Chriſt. Luk.12.47. (*That ſervant that knew his maſters will and prepared not himſelfe neither did according to his will, ſhall be beaten with many ſtripes*) and alſo that of S. Iames 4.16.17. (*To him that knoweth how to doe well, and doth it*

not,

not, to him it is ſinne) with a witneſſe, a great ſinne greatly to be puniſhed. Againe he that ſinnes out of wilfull ignorance, becauſe careleſly and ſtubbornly he neglects and contemnes all meanes of knowledge, that are afforded him, this mans fault is not a iot leſſned but aggravated by his ignorance, nor hath he any excuſe in the world for his ill doing who might if it had pleaſed him haue knowne the way how to haue done better. But now he that ſinnes out of ſimple ignorance, where there is no froward, ſcornefull, careles neglect of meanes of knowledge, this mans ſinne is ſomewhat leſſe then the others, yet 'tis a ſinne ſtill. This is manifeſt by that of our Sauiour *Luke* 12. 48. (*he that knew it not, yet did commit things worthy of ſtripes, he ſhall be beaten with few ſtripes*) he ſhall be beaten though he did it out of pure ignorance, yet but with few ſtripes, and that becauſe he did it ignorantly. So Paul ſomewhat excuſeth his perſecution of the Church becauſe 'twas done out of an ignorant zeale: but yet for all that he accoũts of himſelfe as he was, euen at that time a very great ſinner. (*I was ſaith he a blaſphemer and a perſecutor, and an oppreſſor, but I was receiued to mercy becauſe I did it ignorantly through vnbeleife*) 1. *Tim.* 13. And in like ſort doth the Apoſtle Peter ſomewhat quallify that great ſinne of crucifying Chriſt the Lord of life: wherevnto the common people and many of the rulers ignorantly conſented, being miſled and ill adviſed by the prieſts, Phariſees and other malitious enimies of Chriſt. (*And now brethren I know that through ignorance ye did it, as did alſo your Gouernors*) ſaith Peter to the Iewes. *Acts* 3. 17. So much alſo our Saviour implies in that ſpeech of his to the Phariſees, who proudly arrogated to themſelueues all knowledge (*If yee were blind ye ſhould not haue ſinne*) had they indeed beene ſimple & ignorant, their ſinne in perſecuting Chriſt, and oppoſing the Goſpell, had beene much leſſe hainous. (*But now yee ſay, wee ſee, therefore your ſinne remaineth*) vnexcuſable, vnpardonable whilſt againſt their knowledge, they malitiouſly deſpiſe Chriſt

and his doctrine. *Iohn.*9.41. This of the firſt queſtion, the opening whereof confutes the ſillineſſe of many ignorant mē who think verily becauſe they haue no knowledg, that God will hold them excuſed for their good meaning ſake.

The ſecond queſtion is.

2 *What meaſure of holy knowledge is required of each one?*

For anſwere herevnto, you muſt put a difference between mens abilities, and gifts of nature or grace, & alſo between mens callings and diuerſe imploiments. For the firſt, all men are not alike qualified with inward abilities; There is not the ſame faſtneſſe of memory, quickneſſe of apprehenſion, ſoundnes of iudgment in one, that is in another, nor haue all the like benefit of outward helpes in their education, for the perfecting of ſuch good parts, as nature hath lent thē. Now God deales equally, where he beſtows much there he lookes for much againe; where he giues little, there he requires but little. He that naturally is ſlow of witt, dull of conceipt, ſhort of memorie, weake in iudgement, ſuch a one would be pitied and louingly helped forward ſo farre in knowledg as his weakneſſe will giue leaue. And men ſhall doe ill to lay heauie burdens on thoſe, to whom God hath giuen but weake ſhoulders to beare them. But when men can ſhew witt enough in other matters, and haue all abilities of minde to ſerue their turne in inferior imployments, to apprehend, diſcourſe, plot and contriue matters as they liſt, and yet the ſame men, be dunſes in all religious knowledge, they are inexcuſable, and muſt anſwere for their vnthankfulneſſe; and miſimployment of that talent he hath giuen vnto them. Thus there is a difference in regard of mens abilities: there is alſo a difference in reſpect of mens diverſe callings. God doth not require the ſame meaſure of honour or knowledge of a lay man, which he doth of a miniſter, of a plaine man, & of a ſcholler, of a private perſon, and of a publike gouernor. Here the rule is. *That God requires of every one ſo much knowledge, that he may know how in his place to carry himſelfe in*

all wiſdome and vnblameableneſſe. He may not come ſhort, nor yet goe beyond his bounds, but duly conſidering what belonges to his place, he muſt ſtudy to be throughly informed thereof. Moreouer this muſt be obſerued in generall touching all men, of whatſoeuer calling or gift: that no man can attaine to any ſuch degree of knowledge, that he ſhould therewith reſt himſelfe contēted,& ſeeke no farther; the wiſeſt know but in part.& they may know more perfection is to be ſought for,but it will neuer be had in this life,& therefore mē muſt be ſtill thriuing in the knowledg of God ſchollers muſt ſtudy ſtill, Miniſters preach, people muſt heare ſtill, all muſt grow richer in this treaſure of ſpirituall wiſedome. In a word no man muſt ceaſe learning, till God giue ouer teaching. And know this that the man, who bewailes his ignorance, and daily ſearches after knowledge, in the vſe of good meanes, he ſhall gaine this advantage, firſt the little knowledge which he hath ſhall doe him much good, & then in due time, his ſtock ſhall increaſe according to that promiſe (*to him that hath*(and vſeth it well *ſhall be giuen*(more) *& he ſhall haue abundance*) Let thus much ſuffice to be ſpokē for the vnfolding of the nature of this ſinne, Come wee in the laſt place to make application of all vnto our owne vſe.

Vſe. 1. 1 The firſt vſe ſhall be for reprehenſion of the ignorant perſons, whoſe fault is here declared to be great, and their condition miſerable : which notwithſtanding, there are in the world many patrons of this ſinne, who both in opinion and practiſe defend this ſinne and approue it. I ſhall name vnto you two ſorts of them.

1 Papiſts, who make a direct profeſſion of this ſhamefull ſinne, with them the beſt way for a man to doe his duty is not to know it at all: and no devotion is comparable to that which is blind,nor any ſeruice like that which is beaſtly, and vnreaſonable. Let an ignorant Catholike that can reade neuer a letter, nor vnderſtand ſcarce a ſyllable in the Creede, Lords prayer,Ten commandements or other part of

of his catechiſme, let him yet hold faſt by his ghoſtly fathers ſleeue, doe as he bids him, come to Church and heare Lattine ſervice, reade lattine prayers doe he knowes not what, yea any thing the Prieſt commands him, and then they'le warrãt him cockſure from falling into the ditch, be he neuer ſo blinde. Let Paul finde fault with zeale without knowledge. *Rom.* 10.2.3. 'Tis no matter what he ſaith, they'le contradict him to his teeth, and tell vs as they teach their people, that ignorance is the beſt mother of true Catholike devotion. In which impudencie ſome haue gone ſo farre of late daies, as to erect a new order of friers, whoſe very rule, and profeſſion was ignorance of all things except Chriſt, and the virgin Mary. It is not poſſible that all things ſhould haue comen to this paſſe amongſt them, were there not knavery in the buſineſſe, But the truth is this, Popery is one great parte of the kingdome of darkeneſſe, and for the ſupport hereof, it was needfull to ſhut out the light for feare of diſcouering their ſecret abominations. If their deeds were good why doe they hate the light? If their opinions were ſound, why are they afraid of Scripture? 'Tis ſelfe guiltineſſe breeds thoſe feares and iealouſies, And that Atheiſticall ſlander of Gods word, that the Scriptures are obſcure, that the reading of the Bible will make men hereticks, In ſhort, the beſt conſtruction wee can make of their Practiſes in this kinde is, that they miſtruſt Popery would downe, if people had but knowledge to ſee their villanies and errors: they ſee the credit of Prieſts & Priers would downe, who now be the only admired oracles of knowledge among their ignorant people, & which is more, *thoſe ſlow bellies. and euill beaſts*, ſee, 'twould coſt them much paines, and toile to bring their people to knowledge, after ſo long neglect of that courſe, wherefore they ſit ſtill, grow lazie and fat, whilſt their people is well enough content to be vntaught, and ſo to periſh in their ignorance, Idolatry, and Superſtition.

2 Proteſtants amongſt whom wee haue a number which

are Papiſts in their practiſes; what euer they be in their opinions. Among vs many there be that *haue left off to vnderſtand and doe good* as it is *Pſal.*36.3. men of ill liues, and ignorant mindes, that out of careleſneſſe or contempt profit not one iot, either in knowledg or obediēce of the Goſpell. This is a raigning ſinne that ſpreads farre and wide ouer all quarters of the land, a killing ſinne that ſlaies thouſands of ſoules, which fall daily into the pit and ſnare, before they are aware that evill is toward them. 'Tis the grand factor for hell and that, wherin the devill hath euer laboured by deepeſt polices to keepe men from knowledge; either that they might not haue the meanes, or not profit by thē, when they had them. What ſhall We ſay, my brethren, to the lamentable ignorāce amongſt people: ſhall we excuſe it? 'tis not poſſible. For *I demand* in the Apoſtles words. *Rom.* 10.18. *(haue they not all heard the Goſpell? no doubt the ſound thereof hath gone through all the land, and the words thereof to the end of the earth)* All means of knowledge haue beene plentifull amonſt vs, Preaching, Catechizing, Printing and all theſe for a long time, ſixty yeares and vpward, ſo that one would thinke now all might know the Lord from the greateſt to the meaneſt: and if ever in any, now in our country might be fulfilled that of Habbakkuk, *c.*2.14. *(the earth ſhall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the ſea)* If in any particular place meanes haue beene ſcant, and the people haue had but little inſtruction, ill may they thriue with their idleneſſe, by whoſe negligence God, people haue periſhed for lack of knowledg. And if any ſuch heare mee, let them be intreated in the bowels of Chriſt Ieſus, to haue more pitty and compaſſion on the poore ſoules which goe aſtray, as ſheepe which haue no ſheepheard. But, my brethren, you muſt know, that this excuſe will not ſerue the turne, neither if miniſters will not teach, we need not learne; No, if they will not, ſeeke where thou maieſt, and doe not thou throw away thy ſelfe, becauſe another is careles of thy

ſafety.

ſafety. But of all what excuſe will they haue, who haue beene borne and bred vp in pariſhes that haue had preaching almoſt time out of mind. Here one would thinke in regard of time and meanes, men might be teachers rather then learners: but 'tis nothing ſo. Here alſo ſhall you meet with hundreds that had need be taught their very *A.B.C.* in matters of religion: 'tis no marvell to ſee children or yong men ignorant, when you ſhall haue old men fifty, ſixty, yea eighty yeares old, whoſe gray haires ſhew that they haue had time enough to learne more wit, yet in caſe to bee ſet to ſchoole againe for their admirable ſimplicity in the knowledge of religion. They'le ſcorne to be queſtioned, but doe but get them in a good mood and talke with them about religion, aske them the meaning of the Articles of faith, of the petitions in the Lords prayer, or of other common points in Catechiſme, and marke their anſweres, you ſhall ſee them ſo ſhuffle and fumble, ſpeake halfe words, and halfe ſentences, ſo hacke and hew at it, that you may almoſt ſweare they ſpeake they know not what of matters out of their element: though they be the wiſeſt and craftieſt headed men in a pariſh, take them in other matters; yet in theſe things, you would thinke verily they were borne ſtarke naturalls and Idiots: they will ſometimes ſhape you ſuch ſtrange, abſurd, and vnexpected anſweres to your queſtions that when a man cannot chooſe but pitty them, he hath much a doe to forbeare laughing at them. Let me tell a ſtory that I haue heard from a reverend man out of the pulpit, a place where none ſhould dare to tell a lie; of an old man aboue ſixty, who liued and died in a pariſh, where there had beene preaching almoſt all his time, and for the greateſt part twice on the Lords day, beſides at extraordinary times. This man was a conſtant hearer as any might be, & ſeemed forward in the loue of the word; on his death bed being queſtioned by a miniſter, touching his faith and hope in God: you will wonder to heare what anſwere he made: being demanded, what he thought of God,

he anſweres that he was a good old man: & what of Chriſt, that he was a towardly young youth: and of his ſoule, that it was a great bone in his body, and what ſhould become of his ſoule after he was dead, that if he had done wel he ſhould bee put into a pleaſant greene meddow. Theſe anſweres aſtoniſhed thoſe that were preſent to thinke how it were poſſible, for a man of good vnderſtanding, and one that in his daies, had heard by the leaſt two or three thouſand ſermons, yet on his death bed in ſerious manner thus to deliuer his opinion in ſuch maine points of religion, which infants and ſucklings ſhould not be ignorant of. But, my brethren, be aſſured this man is not alone, there be many hundreds in his caſe, who come to Church and heare much, happely a hundred ſermons and a halfe in a yeare: yet at yeares end, are as much the better for al, as the pillers of the Church againſt which they leane, or the pewes wherein they ſit. A matter greatly to be lamented, and ſharply reproued, that wiſe men, politicke men, graue men, great men, rich men, men that carrie the name of Chriſtians, ſhould yet bee ſuch very children in all godly knowledg. Wherefore in the next place let this be for exhortation.

Vſe 2. 1 To Miniſters, that they would bee carefull to teach the people: if people periſh for want of knowledge, ſhall Miniſters eſcape who are negligent in teaching? Bee ſure of it, both ſmart together, they for their ignorance, theſe for their negligence: ſuch miniſters haue their doome in my Text (*becauſe thou haſt reiected knowledge, I will alſo reiect thee*) *The people ſhal indeed periſh in their ſins, but their bloud &c.* whoſe office it was to inſtruct, admoniſh, reproue, entreat, and by all meanes to turne the people from their evill waies. Oh that ſuch men would be pleaſed to conſider, that the beſt ſervice they can do, the greateſt honour they can attaine vnto, is to bee faithfull labourers in Gods vineyard! What a honour and happineſſe is it to a man, to be made a common bleſſing vnto all men round about him, to be eies to the blind, leggs

to the lame, a mouth to the dumbe, a ſtaffe to the feeble, a phyſitian to the ſick, a counſellour in hard caſes, a watchman in danger, a captaine in conflicts, ſo much and much more is a miniſter vnto his people, if he doe his duty as he ought. And vnworthy they are of that office, who ſcorne to take the paines that belongs to it, or thinke it an eaſie, or ſmall matter to ſaue a ſoule from death. But happely I ſpeake to them that heare me not: wherefore the next exhortation is.

2 To people, that they would take notice in themſelues of this ſoule ſinne to amend it, Some men are ignorant of this like men in the darke, thinking themſelues faire, becauſe they ſee not their owne deformities; Come now then into the light; looke on thy ſelfe, ſee what an ignorant wretch thou art, bewaile it, repent of it, amend it. Bee aſhamed in your ſelues, of that which you are aſhamed of, when any man takes notice of it, bluſh at your ignorance, and heare what the ſpirit of God ſaith to you, *Prou.* 1.22. (*How long yee ſimple ones will yee loue ſimplicity &c.*) If a man call you fools and ſimple perſons, you'le bee angry with him, now God calls you ſo, be angry with your ſelues, bee aſhamed of your ſelues that God ſhould ſtill call you ſimple, ſcornfull, fooliſh, becauſe ignorant, diſobedient men. Say now in thine owne heart, how fooliſh, how brutiſh haue I beene? How like a beaſt, nay how much worſe then a beaſt haue I liued? *The oxe knoweth his owner, the aſſe his maſters crib, but I haue not knowne or conſidered ought*; ſurely I haue not in mee the vnderſtanding of man: what folly and ſimplicity is this in me, to know any thing, but what I ſhould knowe, God and his goodneſſe, my ſelfe and my dutie? How many ſermons haue I heard in vaine? How often haue I diſcouraged my miniſter making him weepe and ſigh in ſecret to ſee ſo little fruit of his miniſterie. Ignorant I was when he firſt came to the pariſh, and now after many yeares am ignorant ſtill. I ſee yong men yea little children can giue a better reaſon, yea anſwere more ſoundly to points of Catechiſme then I can. Think thus with

with thy ſelfe, and then grow into reſolution to take a new courſe, begin to doe that which is never too late to be done, to knowe God, and which waies thou maiſt worſhip and obey him, reſolue to take all opportunities, to ſpare as many houres as thou canſt for the purchaſing of this heavenly wiſdome. And leaſt that here alſo thou ſhouldſt plead ignorance: that thou wouldſt get knowledge if thou kneweſt which way, hearken a little to ſome directions. The meanes whereby knowledge will be gotten are theſe.

1 Hearing the word of God preached: this is the chiefe meanes wherevnto you muſt giue all diligent heed, God hath appointed it for this end, to the inſtruction of the ignorant, and it goes accompanied with his ſpeciall bleſſings to that purpoſe. Wherefore ſit not at home, lie not abed, when thou ſhouldſt be at Church. Come and come often, eſpecially on the Lords day, and in the weeke too when occaſion ſerues; ſpare an houre for a ſermon as well as two for a play, or a feaſt, idle chatting, or doing nothing. When thou comeſt to Church, come with a minde to learne, ſet thy ſelfe in good earneſt to heed the Preacher, marke what doctrine hee delivers, how he proues, how he applies it. Keepe the point he ſpeakes of in thy memory as he goes along, and if thou be ſhort witted, helpe thy ſelfe with thy pen; gaze not, ſleepe not, talke not, thinke not of this and that buſineſſe, fixe thy eies vpon the Preacher, and thy thoughts vpon his words, & be ſure ſo to carry the matter that ſomething may be gotten by an houres diſcourſe. But there is another thing to bee thought on in the ſecond place, and that is.

2 Meditation, a dutie every way neceſſary after hearing: men thinke they haue done enough, if they ſit out the ſermon and hearken attentiuely whilſt the preacher is in ſpeaking: but as ſoone as the preacher hath done, they haue done too: they neither thinke, nor ſpeake more of it, every man ſorts himſelfe with his friend and companion, and then in Church or Church-yard, or as they goe home, an hundred idle

idle queſtions be asked and anſwered about this man, and that, this buſineſſe, and that, this bargaine, or that, but not a word touching any thing they heard at Church: ſo that by the time they come home, the foules of the ayre haue picked vp all the ſeed, that laye ſcattered, and careleſſely vncouered, the Sermon is quite fled and gone from their mindes. Come to them and clappe them on the ſhoulders, and ſay, now for a wager where was the preachers Text, what remember you of the points hee diſcourſed of; they can tell you no more what hee ſaid, then the man in the moone. My bretheren, I beſeech you take notice of this fault, and thinke of it, as that maine cauſe, why there is ſo much preaching and hearing, and yet people doe ſtill remaine as ignorant, as wicked as ever. Here's the cauſe, the Preacher doth his part, they will not doe theirs, they heare the Sermon at Church and there they leaue it, but never carry home any thing to make it their owne by often meditating on it. Wherfore remember henceforth that a Sermon is but halfe heard, that is onely heard from the preachers mouth. The greateſt part is yet behinde to bee performed by thy ſelfe at home. Goe home then, thinke of it as thou art in the way, thinke of it when thou art in thine houſe: take time to recall things to mind, doe it with thy family, doe it with thy ſelfe; in thy cloſet, vpon thy bed, ſay ſuch a ſinne was reproued to day, am I, haue I beene guilty of it? Such a dutie was vrged vpon me, doe I practiſe it or no? Such a grace was commended vnto mee, haue I ſuch a grace? Such a rule was preſcribed me, doe I follow it or not? If men would bee perſwaded to make triall of this courſe, thus to digeſt what they heare, they ſhould finde (as others haue done) a plentifull increaſe of ſauing knowledge in a ſhort time, whereas now they thriue not a iot, by their daily hearing many yeares together.

3. Conference with thoſe that are able to giue vs reſolution in difficult caſes: or with thoſe that deſire it from vs;

A point wherein men are generally defectiue. Obſerue all the diſcourſe of men when they meete together, not the hundred part is touching religion: you ſhall haue a table ſometimes furniſhed with as choice men as meats, men of learning, iudgment, and experience in all kindes, able men to benefit others that are preſent, by ſeaſonable and fitting diſcourſe. Yet 'tis ſtrange to ſee two or three houres eaten vp, and nothing ſpoken to any Purpoſe, for which a man may ſay when he is gone, that he hath beene the better for their company. As for ordinary meetings, 'tis ſo that it is ſcarce good manners, to moue a queſtion of divinity, for feare of marring all the mirth, if you doe, you are like to anſwer your ſelfe to your owne queſtion, they are preſently mute as fiſhes, and haue not a word to ſay. A great dinne there was before and much chat: but ſuch a queſtion is like a ſtone hurld in among a company of frogs, that make a fowle noiſe, but vpon the fall thereof they are ſtraight as ſtill as may be. This is a fault but not the greateſt in this kinde: we will not reſtraine conference to tables; there be other places, that are happily more fit, the miniſters houſe, the learned mans ſtudy, hither people ſhould reſort to enquire and be reſolued in points of knowledge and practiſes that doe concerne them. But how long ſhall a Miniſter ſit in his ſtudy, before any of his pariſh will trouble him about any ſuch matters. Lawyers & Phyſitians are thronged with clients and patients at all houres, day and night: for adviſe about matters of body and eſtate: but who knocks at the miniſters doores calling for his helpe for their ſoules; S^r tell mee how ſhall I vnderſtand ſuch a place of ſcripture, make me to conceiue ſuch a point of Divinity, adviſe me how ſhall I get ſuch a grace, avoide ſuch a ſinne; ſuch a temptation; what were I beſt to doe in ſuch a caſe of conſcience. Miniſters I am ſure complaine much of the backwardneſſe of people in this point, not that they loue to be ſought to, or look for a fee, but becauſe they ſeeke their peoples good and,

and would gladly take all opportunities, to encreaſe knowledge in them, whoſe ignorance they cannot but pittie and commiſerate. Wherefore my brethren, learne a point of wiſdome to take notice of all doubts, and when in reading or hearing thou meeteſt with any thing thou vnderſtandeſt not keepe it in minde till thou maiſt haue a fit occaſion to get a reſolution. Where ever thou comeſt be not aſhamed to miniſter occaſion of good diſcourſes, that others may bee the better for thee, and thou for them before ye part.

4 Private reading of the Scriprures, and other bookes tending to Godly inſtructions. A courſe if duely obſerued that would bring a great deale of knowledge, eſpecially in this our age, where the preſſe is as fruitfull in good bookes as the pulpet is of good Sermons. No booke of Scripture but you haue the expoſition of ſome learned man vpon it, no point of divinity, but you ſhall finde it largely & plainly handled in ſome treatiſe or other. A great bleſſing to this age, if men would be wiſe to make vſe of it, but the truth is, men haue as little regard of printing as they haue of preaching. Looke to the ordinary ſort of people; they doe not reade ſcarce one chapter of the bible in a weeke, I may ſay in a yeare, ſo ignorant that they can hardly finde the booke whence the preacher takes his text, or how to diſtinguiſh betweene Apocrypha and Canonicall Scripture. How many are there of good ſort & faſhion that haue read much and many great volumes, which yet cannot ſay at eighty years old, that in all their life they haue read over the Bible. A booke that is none of the biggeſt, but is of all the beſt. What can wee pretend for this monſtrous negligence? canſt thou not reade? blame thy friends and parents for the time thou waſt a childe; ſince that blame thy owne folly. Any one may learne to reade, that hath wit to learne any thing. But thou haſt no mony to buy bookes: what? haſt thou mony to ſpend in a taverne, to play away at cardes & Dice, to buy lace and needleſſe ſuperfluities of apparell, and

haſt thou not mony to buy a Bible ; or any other good Booke? for ſhame ſay not ſo. But I haue no time to read; for any thing elſe time enough, to doe nothing , to lie a bed till noone, to ſit two or three houres at dinner or ſupper , to goe to ſuch a friend and there ſpend halfe a day , to ſuch a friend and there ſpend another, to doe any chare that comes in extraordinarily. Away with thoſe excuſes; 'tis certaine, my brethren, there is no calling be it of never ſo much employment, but of twentie foure houres, they may if they liſt ſpare two at the leaſt for religious imploiments : yea more if they bee wiſe and thriftie of their time. But I cannot buy all bookes, not read all; nor would any man haue thee doe ſo: but buy ſome, read ſome, canſt thou not tell which are beſt and moſt profitable? Then aske counſell of the skilfull , that are able to adviſe thee. But learning is a hard matter, and 'tis not for plaine folke to vnderſtand the Bible. No ; is it not? Then God is too blame that hath written a word for the inſtruction of all, which yet none but Schollers ſhould vnderſtand: but know this is nothing but an excuſe for thy ſlothfulnes, learning is hard, becauſe thou art vnwilling to learne: otherwiſe the ſpirit of God hath teſtified that knowledge is plaine, and eaſie to him that will vnderſtand. And doe but trie, taking but that paines in the ſtudy of religion, which thou doſt in many needleſſe imployments: and experience ſhall tell thee , that wiſdome is to bee found of all that doe ſeeke her And yet my brethren becauſe the Well is deepe, and you may plead , that you haue not wherewith to drawe: let mee tell you in the laſt place of one meanes more to get knowledge , which bleſſeth all the forenamed helpes, and that is.

5 Prayers vnto God, that he would giue thee an vnderſtanding heart, to know the myſteries of ſalvation , that he would open thine eies, to ſee the wonders of his law. That light which is in thee muſt come downe from the father of lights, and vnleſſe ſtill thou meane to ſit in darkneſſe , thou

muſt

muſt haue recourſe vnto God, praying him that he would *ſhine into thy heart to giue thee the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Ieſus Chriſt.* And remember this that he who ſeekes for the knowledge of matters of religion, by the ſtrength of his owne wit and other naturall parts, without humble and faithfull ſupplications for Gods aſſiſtance in this behalfe; ſuch a man is in danger to be miſled into many erroneous and hereticall opinions: for if in any thing; much more in the matters of religion is that moſt true: he that is a ſcholler vnto his owne reaſon, hath certainly a foole to his maſter. Wherefore wee are to put on an humble and ſober minde, intreating his direction, & ſubmitting our reaſon to his wiſdome.

Now my brethren doe theſe things and proſper, haue an eare open to heare the word, a heart readie to meditate on it, a tongue ſeaſonablie to talke of it, an eye diligent to read it, and with all theſe ioine heartie praier, that thou maieſt vnderſtand it aright; and then be thriving and ſucceſsfull in holy knowledge: though thy talent be as yet but ſmall; yet follow this courſe, and after a very little paines and patience, thou ſhalt ſee for certaine, that this trafique will returne thee ten for one, even a large increaſe of all ſpirituall knowledge. The gaine whereof ſhall bring much glorie, to that thy heauenly maſter that ſet thee on worke, and to thee his good and faithfull ſeruant, a bountifull reward for thy labour.

FINIS.

HEB. 3. 12. 13.

Take heede leaſt there be in any of you an evill heart of vnbeleiſe, in departing from the liuing God, &c.

THE words containe in them a ſerious exhortation to perſeverance in the profeſſion of the Goſpell of Chriſt. The occaſion is from the Compariſon which the Apoſtle makes betweene *Moſes* and *Chriſt*, and betweene the Church of the Iewes, and of the Gentiles vnder Chriſt; Moſes and Chriſt agreeing, in that both are faithfull to him that appointed them in the execution of their office: but they differ, in that *Moſes* is but a ſeruant in the houſe of God, Chriſt is the ſonne, *Moſes* governed as a delegated officer, Chriſt rules as a ſoueraigne Lord of the Church, the houſe which himſelfe hath built, hauing purchaſed it with his blood, rear'd it vp with his ſpirit, preſeruing it by his power, therefore he is iuſtly Lord of it as of his owne, and ſo he hath the preheminence aboue Moſes. The Church vnder Moſes and vnder Chriſt, what ever difference there be in other matters, yet in this they

they are in one and the same condition, that as there reverence was required vnto Moses, so now obedience is required vnto Christ. It was to no purpose for the Iewes to plead they were Moses disciples, the peculiar people of God, chosen of him, graced by him with so many favours, if yet in the meane time they hardned their hearts, and would not heare Gods voice; but provoked him by their Idolatries, murmurings, & other disobediences, tempted him through Infidelity, and despised his word, and marveilous wonders wrought among them. In this case no priviledge could helpe them, they shall surely smart for their disobedience, and if God may be believed vpon his oath they have displeased him so much, that they shall never enter into his rest. The very same thing the Apostle applies vnto Christians, they are the Church of Christ, members of the body of Christ, partakers of his benefits, and graces, but it is vpon this condition that they shew themselves faithfull in the obedience of the Gospell of Christ, (*His house we are (saith the Apostle ver. 6. (if we hold fast the confidence of reioycing of the hope firme vnto the end*) perseverance & faithfulnesse is that which makes men true members of the Church of Christ, whether Iewish, or Christian: If the Iewes be vnbelieving and rebellious, they come short of the land of Canaan in the type and substance too; If the Christians bee like them in their sin, their punishment is the same, & they are excluded also from the heauenly rest of the people of God. Wherefore the Apostle in the next Chapter presseth this exhortation vehemently. That these Hebrews to whom he writes should carefully looke to themselues, that they were not as their fathers of old, vnfaithfull and disobedient in their profession thereof, least they become also like to their Fathers deprived of all benefit from the promise in Christ. *Take heede therefore Brethren* (saith he) *that there be not, &c.* This is the occasion.

The parts of the words are two.

1 An

1 An *Admonition*, to take heede of Apostasie, or backesliding from religion which is here described. 1. by its nature, it is *a departing from the liuing God*, the fountaine of all goodnesse. 2 by its cause, that is, *an euill heart of vnbeliefe*, a wicked minde that beleiues not Gods word. This admonition is directed in common to all the Hebrewes that professed the faith, because among a multitude, many are Hippocrites, and those that are sound hearted had need to be put in minde, and admonished of their frailty. Wherefore the Apostle saith, *Take heede least there be in any of you an euill heart, &c.*

2 *A remedie*, to prevent Apostasie, that is expressed, *ver.* 13. *viz.* mutuall exhortation to constancie in Godlinesse. (*But exhort one another*) Ministers the people, and the people him, and themselues mutually. This duty is amplified. 1. By the properties: it must be frequent. *daily* καθ' ἑκάστην ἡμέραν even euery day, vpon all set occasions, it must be constãt, holding on till the end of this life, (*While it is called to day*) i.e. so long as grace is offered and danger to be feared, which is, till our liues be at an end, so long are often exhortations needfull to vphold men in their constancie in religion. 2. vrged from the danger that comes by the neglect of it, that is hardnesse of heart; (*least any of you be hardned*) the cause whereof is the beguiling nature of sinne (*through the deceitfulnesse of sinne*) which by degrees steales away the heart from God, and settles it in the obstinate practise of impiety.

You haue the words and the plaine meaning: I come to some instructions for our practise, the first is this. That,

Infidelity is the cause of Apostasie from Religion.

Infidelitie is that which keepes men from entring into the Church of God, & it is that which throwes them out againe when they are entred. The Iewes to whom the Apostle writes, some of them had resisted the Gospell, and put it from them by vnbeleife, others Had embraced it, whom the

Apostle here calls brethren, and before, *ver.* 1. *Holy brethren partakers of the heavenly calling* in charitie, so stiling them, who in visible profession had receiued and followed the doctrine of the Gospell. These the Apostle exhorts to sincerite and faithfulnesse, warning them to take heede that there be not a Canker at the roote, that would in time destroy the whole tree with his fruits, namely, an vnbelieuing heart that would in time make them Apostates from the religion of Christ, which for the present they professed.

The doctrine then is plainly afforded by the text; wee shall endeauour to make it plaine vnto you, 1. by expounding the termes of it. 2. by shewing the reason why one followes of another.

1 By Apostasie (ἀποστασία) for the word is meant a departing or going away from that which we formerly stood to, and followed: for the matter, wee vnderstand hereby in short, the forsaking of true religion in the doctrine of it, or in the practise: for it must be noted that men become backsliders from religion two waies.

1 By leauing the truth of doctrine and giuing heede to lies contrary to what is reuealed in the word: when men fall into Atheisme, and make a jest of religion: or runne to Iudaisme from the Gospell to the Law; a point wherein the Hebrews were apt to be seduced by false teachers zealous of the Law, or when men slip into any Heresie ouerthrowing the faith, or those that cannot relish the water of life, but drinke deepe of the wine of fornication the impoisoned doctrine of *Antichrist*, such forsake the fellowship of the Saints, goe from God and his Church, leape out of the Arke into perdition.

2 By leauing the practise of religion, and godlines, when men professe their assent vnto the truth of the Articles of Faith, and so retaine the forme of godlinesse, but denie the power of it, being disobedient and wicked in their liues, when

when men keepe their faith and haue loſt their conſcience; They could ſometimes haue ſaid and haue done too, but now they can talke, heare & ſtudy about religion. But while their eares, tongues, and braines are buſied, their hearts and their hands are idle. Both theſe are Apoſtates from God equally & alike, there is not the duſt of the ballance to boot betweene the worth of a true beliewer, and a falſe believer if both be wicked liuers. An honeſt infidell will hold weight with a wicked Chriſtian. And a ſober Papiſt is as good as a drunken Proteſtant; nay better, Inaſmuch as it is better to glorifie God what way ſoeuer though in a falſe faith, then to diſhonour his holy name wherewith wee are called by an vnholy converſation, yea ſo foule a corruption of ſo holy a profeſſion muſt needs much more ſhame his life, making it ten times more odious to others and damnable in it ſelfe. Wherefore Hereſie in opinions and wickednesſe in practiſe, both fall vnder this terme of Apoſtaſie from religion. And as he hath no religion at all that denieth the verity of divine Doctrine, ſo, he hath no religion to any purpoſe that holds the truth, but denieth obedience to it. For what ſaith S^t^ Iames *(If any among you ſeemeth to be religious and bridleth not his tongue but deceiueth his owne heart this mans religion is in vaine.* Iam. 1. 26.) He reads vs a leſſon in the next words, which men in his time, & likewiſe now will hardly learne, *viz.* That true religion ſtands in the practiſe of a holy life, as well as profeſſion of divine trueths *(pure religion and vndefiled before God and the Father is this, to viſite the fatherleſſe and widdow in their afflictions and to keepe himſelfe vnſpotted of the world ver.* 27.) Wherefore they are Apoſtates from religion that relinquiſh either the doctrine or the practiſe of religion.

This of the firſt terme, in the next place by infidelity or vnbeliefe, wee meane a withdrawing of our hearts from reſting wholy vpon the trueth of Gods word; now in the word two things are propoſed vnto vs to bee be-

leiued.

1 All manner of doctrines or Articles of religion to bee firmely beleiued and maintained, against all Heresies and false doctrines.

2 All sorts of co nmandements, threatnings and promises tending to the direction of our practise, which we are to beleiue and embrace against all counsels, terrors, or allurements, whatsoeuer, tending to draw vs from obedience in our liues. Both these are the obiects of true faith whereby men yeeld assent vnto all doctrines, commandements, threatnings, promises of God, not only as true and good in themselues, but as better and truer then any thing in the world that can be set against them, whence in all persuasion vnto errour, in all temptatiō vnto vice, true faith resting it selfe on the word of God winnes the victorie, and ouercomes the world. But where this is wanting, an easie way is left to all Heresies, and impiety, &c. Thus for the explication of the tearmes of this proposition: let vs see.

2 The connexion of them together, how Apostasie springs from Infidelitie: The reason is, because there is no other grace, that hath the proper office and power, to vphold a man in the constant embracing of all holy duties, and constant practise of all good workes, but only faith; and therefore where that is not, men must needs fall away from both.

That such is the force and vse of true faith, you shall see by considering the obiects of it.

1 All diuine truths to be held and professed in matter of Religion, which are aboue our naturall and corrupt reason; and therefore vnlesse our vnderstanding bee by a true faith captiuated vnto the obedience of Christ, that we cā resigne vp our owne wits to be ruled by Gods wisdome, and rest our selues only vpon the true word of God, it is not possible, that ever wee should finde sure footing, where and in what certaine truth to rest our selues, but shall alwaies bee

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as those Children spoken of, *Ephes.* 4. 14. of weake and vnsetled mindes, easily perswaded to believe any thing, being like small barkes without sufficient ballasse, *κυδωνιζόμενοι καὶ περιφερόμενοι tossed vp and downe* vpon the waues like a feather, and *driven this way and that way with every winde of false doctrine*, raised vp by our owne foolish fancies, or by the device and *craftinesse of men lying in wait to delude vs.*

2 All commandements of God touching our holy practises, together with all the threatnings, if we doe not obey, and promises if we doe. Now these things are partly contrary to our corrupt nature and vile affections, which cannot subiect themselues to Gods law, partly they are beyond the reach and desire of our sensuall and worldly minds which see no great matter to be loued and feared, in whatsoever God threatneth or promiseth. Gods law is holy but we are not so, Gods promises are spirituall, but wee are carnall, led by sensualitie, placing our affections on things that are in present view, and therefore naturally every man from the wombe is adverse, and backward from doing that which God commandeth, or believing what he promiseth or threatneth. Now then what can vphold a man in his obedience to Gods law, and dependance vpon Gods promises? It is only a true faith, which apprehending truely the authoritie and high soveraignety which God hath in commanding vs, and together therewith beholding the excellent holinesse and goodnesse of his commandements, makes the heart stoope vnto obedience, be it never so irkesome vnto it selfe. Againe when faith apprehends the immutablenesse of God in his word, whe it seeth the pretiousnesse of the promises of mercy with their certainety, when it seeth the terriblenesse of its threats together with the vnavoideable accomplishment of them vpon obstinate men. Here now the heart rests it selfe as on an anchor sure and stedfast, it is filled with a constant feare to offend, because it knowes punishment is not to be escaped, it is filled with

continuall ioy in its obedience, because it abides assured of the reward. But where this support of faith is wanting, all obedience presently falls to peeces, then if God command or forbid vs any thing, we beginne to take advise whether it be good to obey, yea, or no, wee fall to aske councell of Sathan, of our selues, of other men as bad as our selues. If they say no, there is our resolution too, God must looke him out other servants; wee are not for his turne. If Sathan tempt vs strongly, if our affections rage when they are crossed, if men frowne or fawne vpon vs, wee are quickly turned out of the way, and our purposes of obedience are all dasht in a moment. Let God and his Ministers threaten never so much, we then thinke within our selues that threatned men liue longest, & such angry words breake no bones, let God promise never so faire, wee can beginne to smile secretly in our hearts, and thinke they are but faire words, that make none but fooles faine. Indeed if the world threaten or promise, wee thinke there is something in an arme of flesh that may doe vs hurt or good; but when faith is fled, certaine close Atheisticall imaginations beginne to fasten vpon the minde concerning God and religion, as if religion were but a pretty politicke complement, & that God is one who will doe neither good nor evill, and that we haue no great cause to feare or trust him. Wee see then my brethren, how plaine a downfall there is from Infidelity to Apostasie, from God and all goodnesse: when men want faith by the light whereof their blinde reason might bee guided, by the power whereof their disordered hearts might bee kept in compasse, they straight runne madly into all wicked opinions and mischievous practises. Most true is that of Saint *Iames*, Chap. 1. ver. 8. *A double minded man is vnstable in all his waies.*] A double minded man, that is, an vnbeleiving person, whose faith and opinion stands vpon tearmes of indifferencie and probabilitie, he is in *vtramq; partem* on both sides, or betweene both, in neither; his opinions in matters

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of religion are variable according to seasons and occasions, he holds much of his religion by the coppie of mens countenances, much of it by permission of his lusts with manifold reservations and provisoes, that it shall bee lawfull for him in such and such cases to doe or beleeue otherwise then for the present he doth, when men are thus of double minds who resolue vpon both sides, and so resolue vpon neither; who cast about in their thoughts and say, I beleeue this, but it may be 'tis otherwise, I doe this, but what if I doe it not; what if I doe the contrary: when mens mindes looke thus a squint on two things at once, they must needs bee vnstable in their waies: If sauing faith in the truth of God doe not establish the heart in a full relyance vpon God only, it is impossible but that a man should be of a wauering and moueable temper, vnstable in his opinions, vnsetled in his practises (ἀκατάστατος) like a man that stands vpon one legge, easily overturned, like a bowle on a smooth table, that's pushed aside with the least touch of a finger; whereas the true beleever founded and stablished in the faith is *one of those liuing stones*, which S^t *Peter* speaketh of 1. *Pet.* 2. 5. which are squared and surely placed vpon the foundation, therevpon resting vnmoueable.

Thus much for the opening of this point sufficiently for our vse, as that which needs practise more then proofe. The vses I shall commend vnto you shall be no other then those which are made alreadie to our hand in the text.

The first vse shall be for exhortation, that we be now admonished of this matter: what the Apostle speakes to these Hebrewes, the same I say vnto you, *Beloued, Take heed brethren least there be in any of you an euill heart of vnbeliefe, in departing from the liuing God.* Be well aduised, looke well about you, it is a matter of greatest moment, herevpon depends your constancie in religion, and vpon that dependes your happinesse in heauen. My trust is, this exhortation will not be slighted by you, if you will a little consider seriously *Vse.* 1.

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of these motiues, that may stirre you vp to this diligent caution. I will name but two things, which the Apostle also in this place giues vs notice of.

1 The easinesse to fall into this evill of vnbeleife and Apostasie: the Apostle in this and the next chapter is very vehement, in admonishing the Hebrews of this danger. And good reason, seeing it is a matter not easily heeded without good forewarning. Wee easily deceaue our selues in this matter through the wickednesse and guile of our owne hearts, many times vainely imagining our hearts to be good and faithfull, when indeed they be evill hearts of vnbeliefe. This is a peece of cunning which they are not to learne: *viz.* to beguile vs with counterfeit graces insteed of currant. But that which deceiues men chiefly in this businesse, is this; that because we liue in one common societie of the church, therefore wee dreame of a communitie of faith and salvation. What meane else those careless thoughts and speeches of many? I thanke God I haue a strong faith and haue had ever; I am a Christian, a Protestant baptized, and bred vp in the true faith of Christ Iesus, I frequent good exercises, I liue as most men doe, &c. whence they thinke this is sufficient, and that now there is no danger of miscarrying. Men take vp their religion as they doe fashions, what most men haue, they must haue also; most men speake well of religion, great men countenance it, a religious King loues & defends it, and it is the fashion to be a Protestant, and therefore they will be so, least they be singular: As vertues bee not disliked when they grow common (which is seldome) men will seeme at least to loue them. My brethren wee abhorre Popery, and yet can be content to doe as Papists doe, *viz.* to take vp our religion vpon trust. If it be not so, whence then is the ignorance, the vngodlinesse of so many in our Churches; multitudes there be of men, who knowe not but that another religion may bee as good as that which they professe, and for ought themselues or any body else can tell, bee as ready

ready to leaue as to keepe what they haue. Our aduersaries see this, and stick not to triumph at this our weaknesse, that wee may haue Churches full of people, but empty of sound Protestants: They will tell vs in their bookes, that a great part that are on our sides, haue no other motiues to hold them here, but only becauſe they haue bin ſo borne and bred, and receiued their religion as they doe their inheritance, by deſcent and cuſtome of the Country; men whom decrees of Parliament and feare of lawes keepe with vs rather then any certaine knowledge of the truth of our religion by the Scripture. It is a ſhame that wee are not able to confute ſuch ſhamefull imputations. To ſay it is worſe, with our aduerſaries, whoſe chiefe policy to keepe ſimple ſouls within the pale of their Church is ignorance, and feare of the Inquiſition, this may ſtop their mouths, but it helpes not vs. Wee may ſee and pitty the miſerable eſtate of moſt, who if they be examined by a Miniſter touching their faith, will make him bluſh and bleſſe himſelfe to ſee their ignorance; But if ſuch fall into the hand of a Prieſt or Ieſuite to try them a little, they will ſoone ſtreine at their religion. Is it not ſtrange that they ſhould be men that profeſſe it, and that forwardly too ſometimes, who yet are not able to maintaine it? How ſoone thinke you will ſuch plants as theſe be ſhaken with every blaſt, and torne vp out of our Church, when they haue taken no deeper roote in the faith; eſpecially if temporall reſpects ſhould meete together with Sophiſticall arguments, and turne them aſide from the puritie of the Goſpell. But theſe are not all that deceiue themſelues: not only ignorant perſons, but thoſe that haue knowledge and liue vngodly, runne into the ſame errors, and danger, men that are lyars, ſwearers, adulterors, oppreſſors, voluptuous perſons, yea ſcoffers at true piety will be accounted men that loue religion, and ſuch as will ſtand to defend it if need be. But they are not aware that there is in them an euill heart that will deceiue them. May we thinke that ſuch

men whose end is to liue loosely will much deliberate in what religion to doe it? vnlesse they thinke the name of a Protestant will be enough to saue a libertine, what availes it whether they beleiue well or ill, when they are resolved to liue wickedly. Such ignorant and vitious persons as these (and these take vp a great part of our Companies) such as these they be that runne vpon religion at all adventures taking, that which is next before the, never labouring after that faith & knowledge which should be able to endure the triall. So easie a matter is it for me that liue in a true Church to fall into the errors of the Iewes *Luke* 3. 8. (*Wee haue Abraham to our father*) and therefore wee must needs doe well, and God must even doe miracles, and make men of stones if any be saued but they; so now wee liue in a reformed Church, purged with doctrine & discipline, blest with religious Princes, with faithfull Ministers, with peace in the daies of others troubles, and with miraculous deliuerances: And be these priviledges enough to winne our loue to religion, and our constancie in the defending of it? Yes truly they be, if well vsed, & let them perish for euer that would seeke to rob vs of so great blessings by any malitious forces or crafts.

But my Brethren, externall priviledges must not deceiue vs, wee must looke euery one to himselfe that we be not vnreformed persons in a reformed Church, ignorant in so great light of doctrine, disordered vnder goodnes of discipline, men disobedient to prince & priest, luxurious in our peace, secure and vnthankfull after our deliuerances. If wee be so, all is not well with vs, whatsoeuer wee may boast & imagine: there is a roote of bitternesse within our vnbeleiuing hearts, which in time will spring vp into the gall and wormewood of Apostasy from God and his Gospell.

This is the first motiue.

The 2 motiue to make vs heedfull, is the great evill & danger of Apostasie and infidelity. An vnbeleiuing heart is an

an evill heart, a sinfull and wicked heart, a heart vnteachable and vntractable, the word workes not on it, mercy cannot perswade it, judgements cannot breake it, all meanes of favour are in vaine applied to make it yeeld: as wee haue a sufficient example of the Iewes alleadged in this Chapter, with whom Gods word, and great workes prevailed nothing because of their vnbeleife. Thus it is evill in it selfe, it is evill also in its effects, because it breeds a forsaking of God, the very worst of all evills in the world which the Apostle amplifies calling it *Apostasie, a departing frō the liuing God.* This attribute compriseth all the rest & more to vs then all the rest, not only what God is in himselfe, but what he is vnto the creatures, namely the author of their life & being, & so the fountaine of their happinesse & welfare. He therefore that forsakes God, leaues the wellspring of liuing waters to drinke puddle out of a broken Cisterne, he leaues the sunne to warme himselfe at a candle, and departs from life to goe into death: God is truth and light, and they that goe from him runne into darknesse and error, in him only is peace and happinesse, without him ther's nothing but woe and miserie: *(They forsake their owne mercy, that trust in lying vanities) Ionah.* 3.8. being taught by his owne experience; he that flyes away from Gods presence to goe to Thrasis, thinking there to be in safety hee shall be deceiued in his expectation, the windes will not blow favourably vpon such a runagate, the seas will not brooke the shippe that beares him, safety he finds none, but whē he least looked for it in the belly of a fish, & that neither vntill he had returned vnto God, whom he had forsaked, by praier and promise of obedience. Men and Angels and all creatures are but lying vanities deceiuing the hope of them that seeke vnto them for helpe, when their aide is only sought after and God forsaken, they then lead vs into sinne and misery and there leaue vs. Wherefore miserable is the case of Apostates, who turne their backs to religion and sancti-

ty of life, in as much as these things cannot be left, but God must be forsaken too. There is indeed an imagination amongst them, that God will be a friend vnto them in all religions, and in all practises, whatsoeuer. But this is but a Turkish dreame; No, he that departs from faith and obedience, departs also from the liuing God. And whosoeuer so forsakes God, let him also be sure God will forsake him, then which no greater misery can betide a creature.

You see, *Beloued*, what iust cause we haue to enforce this exhortation vpon our selues. *Take heede, &c.* It is easy yet most dangerous to be deceiued herein, wherefore now bethinke your selues, try your hearts in an vnpartiall examination of them, whether they be sound in the faith yea, or no; now that ye may not wander in this search, fasten your meditations vpon these two particulars. 1. Looke to thy knowledge, see vpon what grounds thy faith in God and profession in religion is built. Stands thy faith in the wisedome of men, & beleiuest thou because of their saying? is it founded vpon the custome of the countrie, & of thine owne education, vpon the authority of lawes and good liking of men that establish and maintaine the religion thou professest; if this be the ground-worke of thy faith, thou buildest vpon the sand. Hast thou no sound knowledge of religion thy selfe? Art thou vnable to iustify thy faith by the Scriptures? Is not thy conscience convinced by sure proofe that the religion which thou professest is the very truth of God? If so, know then for a certaine that there is an evill heart within thee, that will betray thee to Apostasie in the time of trouble. Shall a man thinke thou wilt stand to that which thou knowest not throughly: when arguments threatnings, perswasions, and faire promises shall assault thee? Will such sleight imaginations as these endure the stake when all that thou canst say for thy selfe is, I thinke so, men say so, I haue beene taught so, by such and such Ministers, other men are of that opinion, I neuer heard to the contrary? And will such slen-

slender, and ill grounded conceits as these in matter of religion vphold thy heart in a constant resolution to stand for the maintenance of the faith? Will these arme thee with courage against the point of the sword, the heate of the fire, the teeth of the beast, the force of torments, losse of friends, of country, of life for Christ sake? Be assured that if thy religion rest vpon such props as these, that it will fall vpon the dust, when peace, credit, and other temporall respects which are now the maine vndersetters of it, shall be removed, and the whole weight of it shall leane vpon such a broken reede.

2 Looke to thy practise, whereby thou shalt best discover what thy heart is. Is the practise of thy religion entire, faire, vniuersall equally respecting all the commandements, so that thou studiest to thy power to walke before God in vprightnesse and to please him in all things? Art thou the same man in private, that thou art in publike, in thy closet and in thy parlour, in the Church, and in the market, in thy life and in the pulpit? Is thy carriage even and smooth, doe thy holynes towards God, thy righteousnesse towards men, thy sobriety towards thy selfe keepe peace together, & goe hand in hand? Art thou a faithfull Minister, a iust Magistrate, an honest tradesman as well as thou pretendest to be a Christian? If thou canst say yea, & that truly, ther's hope of such a one, that what ever may befall him, hee will not flare back nor deale vnfaithfully in the covenant hee hath made with God, but that his faithfulnesse and vprightnesse shall preserue him from backsliding. But, Beloued, if ye serue God with reservations and secret dispensations, picking and choosing according as it fits your owne humours, doing this thing, disobeying that; If ye trust God in some promises, mistrust him in others, feare him in some threatnings, despise him in others, then know, all is not well within; for there is within an evill heart of vnbeleife, and religion will gaine but little credit, by your costlie in the professing of it

He that shuffles and cutts and choaks his conscience by shifts of wit, stifles in him the good motions of grace, nourisheth in him some wicked affection or other, and liues in the practise of some secret abomination: He that can stumble at a straw and leape ouer a block, straine at a ceremony and neglect the substance of righteousnesse, and iudgement, and the feare of God, he that is forward in such matters as gaine applause, making the shew of his religion his reputation, but in the meane time where ther's no notice taken of him, he liues loosely, intemperatly, and vnconscionably: Let not such a one deceiue himselfe, it is certaine his heart is naught and vnfaithfull, and when God & his religion haue most need of him such a false friend will faile them both. He that hath already denyed the power of Godlinesse, will it be any wonder if afterwards he deny the forme of it? one sinne liued in without repentance is enough to pull a man to hell, and will it not be enough to poperie, or any other heresie? He that will not leaue his sinne for his religions sake, will easily be perswaded to leaue his religion for his sinnes sake, he that will not at Gods command or intreaty bee brought in any hand to put to death the body of sinne, to relinquish any of his pleasing and profitable lusts, & lewd practises, is this man in case to put to death himselfe in the defence of Gods truth, for loue thereof to forsake the world and himselfe too, to part with so much that could not part with so little? He that is already a secret enemy to religion & deuotion, will in time proue an open persecutor of both. He that can despise and in heart deride a protestant minister is in faire forwardnesse to like well of a Popish Priest. In a word he that hath bid farewell to piety to day, it is an even lay but hee may be driuen to take leaue of his religion to morrow. When once the conscience can swallow downe wicked practises, it will soone digest wicked opinions: when once the ship leakes, the lading is in danger both to sinke or swimme together, neither is it possible that a pure faith

faith can be preserued in an impure conscience.

Now (my brethren) let euery one of vs cause our hearts to passe vnder this triall & censure, and so we shall see what we haue to trust to, & what religion hath to trust to vs. Let vs goe vpon sure grounds, care wee that our knowledge of religion be distinct, and certaine, that our practise of it bee sincere, free from Hypocrisie, & so we shall giue good proofe of our faithfulnesse for the present, and our perseuerance for the time to come. Be not slack to goe about this search, and be sure to doe it throughly, delaies are dangerous when the disease is mortall, and to cure by halues is not to cure at all. Secret infidelity is like hereditary diseases, or like bruises taken in youth if they be not looked to in time, & throughly cured they will certainly kill at last.

A gangrene kills when it gets to the heart, and what will that doe that is bread in the heart? Inward diseases, are euer dangerous; but when they haue seized vpon the heart the fountaine of life they proue deadly.

Take then heede of an evill heart poisoned with vnbeleife; and as you loue the credit of religion, the fauour of God, the happinesse of your soules, looke to it betimes to purge forth of you such a venemous humour.

And now for an Antidote against this infection harken in the next place to the second vse.

The second vse is of direction vnto a remedie against vnbeletse, and Apostasie, doe that which the Apostle here exhorts you to (*Exhort one another daily, while it is called to day.*) *Vse. 2.*

FINIS.

EXOD.

XUM

EXOD. 34. 23. 24.

23 *Thrice in the yeare shall all your men children appeare before the Lord God the God of Israel.*

24 *For I will cast out the Nations before thee, and inlarge thy borders: neither shall any man desire thy land, when thou shalt goe vp to appeare before the Lord thy God thrice in the yeare.*

IN these words wee haue two parts to bee obserued. 1 A precept. 2 A promise. The precept is a Leviticall injunction touching certaine times of Solemne worship to bee performed to God by the Israelitish nation, in the 23. *ver.* More distinctly we haue in it three circumstances to be obserued.

1 The time when this seruice was to be performed, that was (*thrice in the yeare*) namely at 3. very solemne feasts, which were these.

1 The Feast of the Passeouer or vnleavened bread, because during the feast for seven daies they might haue no leauened bread in all their dwellings. This feast the whole Nation was to keepe at the Tabernacle where ever it should be set vp: where after they had Sacrificed the Pas-

chall Lamb in the evening, they were to returne on the morrow to their habitations as it is *Deut.*16.7. This Feaſt was kept on the 4th day of the firſt moneth, in memory of their deliuerances out of Ægypt, & in Ægypt from the ſlaying Angell, and in type of Chriſt *that ſaues vs from the wrath to come.*

2 The Feaſt of Pentecoſt, or of weekes, which was kept ſeuen compleat weekes after the Paſſeouer; or beginning the accompt at ripe Harueſt when they put the ſickle to the Corne; fiftie daies after they were to appeare before God with an oblation of the firſt fruits, as it is *Deut.* 16.9. *Lev.*23.15.*&c.* This feaſt was kept in memory of the law giuen at Mount Sinai, fifty daies after the departure of the Children of Iſrael out of Ægypt.

3 The Feaſt of the Tabernacles, kept on the fifteenth day of the ſeaventh Moneth, for ſeuen daies together after the gathering in of Harueſt and Vintage; *Lev.*23.33.*&c.* At which time the Children of Iſrael that were Iſraelites born were to dwell in boothes made of the boughes of thicke and broad leaued trees, leauing their houſes; In memory that they dwelt in Tents or Boothes for many yeares in the wilderneſſe, as it is *verſ.*42.43. of that place. Theſe were the three ſolemne feaſts of the yeare wherein all the Males were to appeare before the Lord, as wee haue this precept explained by another precept, *Deut.*16. 16. *Exod.* 23. 14. *&c.* wherein theſe Feaſts are mentioned. This is the firſt Circumſtance of the time.

2 The ſecoud is the perſons that were at thoſe times to performe this worſhip vnto God theſe are (*All your men Children*) all the Males among the Iſraelites.

3 The third Circumſtance is, the perſon before whom they were to make their appearance, that is God who is here called the (*Lord Iehova*) & the (*God of Iſrael,*) both titles implying that he had iuſt autority to command the Iſraelites ſuch ſolemne Seruices, both in regard of his abſo-

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lute Soueraignty ouer all, and alſo of his gracious mercy towards them his people.

Now vnder this circumſtance of the perſon is implied the place where they ſhould appeare, which was in that place which God ſhould chooſe, wherein to reare vp the Tabernacle, or Sanctuarie, for his ſolemne and ſtanding worſhip. This was firſt at Shiloh, and after that was deſtroyed, at Ieruſalem, in the Temple built by Solomon; which place God choſe *to put his name there*, that is ro eſtabliſh his worſhip and to manifeſt his Glorious preſence in ſpeciall manner in that place. In which reſpect thoſe that appeared in thoſe places dedicated to Gods worſhip, are ſaid to appeare before God himſelfe, there preſent to require and reward their faithfull ſeruices.

This then is the precept, that at three Solemne Feaſts in the yeare, the Paſſeouer, Pentecoſt and Tabernacles all the males of the Iſraelitiſh Nation, ſhould repaire vnto the chiefe place of Gods Publike worſhip, there to offer Sacrifice and performe ſuch ſeruices as were required of them.

Next followes *verſe* 24.

2 The *Promiſe* which is added to the precept by way of prevention, to take away ſuch an obiection as the People might make againſt the equity and Reaſonablenes of the afore named precept; God had commanded three times in a yeare all ſhould come vp to the Tabernacle or Temple, What will become of vs then might the people ſay? If all the men muſt goe vp & leaue their houſes, who ſhall in their abſence defend their wiues, Childrē, Goods Cattle, &c. from ſpoile? We dwell amid'ſt Enimies round about vs the Ammonites, Moabites, Syrians, Phenicians, Philiſtines, Amalekites, Edomites, &c. who beare vs mortall hatred for the wrong they thinke wee haue done them in invading their Territories; theſe will be mindfull of vs, they haue policie enough to know the Cuſtome of our Country, & they will be malitious enough, to watch their beſt opportunitie to

doe vs mischiefe; the season fit for Invasion being the Harvest time. If the Land be thus as it were dispeopled thrice in the yeare they will soone provide forces in a readines to set vpon vs; and when men are absent walls & women are but weake defences, when all shall be at Ierusalē an hundred or more miles from home and that for many daies in their going and coming and abode there, what a spoile may there be committed vpon the borders in the meane time. Wherefore this seruice of God cannot be performed bu with apparent perill to the whole State.

This is the obiection which the Israelites might make both in the wildernes, & after that from time to time when they dwelt in the promised Land.

By way of answer vnto this doubt, God promiseth that no Danger should befall them for obseruing of his commandement in this particular. Our enemies will invade our Country if wee doe it say they: nay, saith God, not so. I will so order matters that they shall doe you no hurt (*neither shall any desire thy Land when thou shalt goe vp thrice in a yeere to appeare before the Lord thy God*) wherein God promiseth that by an especiall providence hee would so governe the hearts of the enimies of his people, that they should not as much as intend them any mischiefe whē they went about the service of God. Though a faire opportunity should be offered them, yet they should haue no Heart or desire to meddle with their countrey. But because they might yet cast a farther doubt and be scarce willing to take God vpon his word in a matter so vnlikely; therefore God to put them out of all feare strengthens this his promise by two other promises which should soone be effectually performed; that by seeing his truth in the one, they may learne to trust to his truth in the other. These promises are 1. That God would driue out the inhabitants of the land of Canaan and giue them a dwelling there, (*for I will cast out the Nations before thee:*) therefore he could easily keepe out their ene-

enimies from re entring that could throwe them out, when they were in poſſeſſion.

2 That he would make their territories larger from time to time (*and I will enlarge thy coaſts*) their Territories aſſigned them ſhould grow wider, not narrower; and they ſhould gaine vpon their enimies, who were more like to win vpon them. Now then he that could giue them a Countrie when they had none, but wandred in the wilderneſſe without houſe or home; he that could enlarge their borders whē at the firſt they were but little (according as experience anone after this time did proue to bee moſt true:) hee alſo could preſerue them from looſing any thing they had, eſpecially when they hazarded it for his owne ſervice ſake.

This is the plaine reſolution of this ſcripture. From hence now we haue two inſtructions for our practiſe here to bee learned. The firſt is,

That no man ſhall be a looſer by his obedience to God. The inference is plaine. The Iſraelites might plead that they could not obey this commandement, becauſe of apparent inconveniences that would follow therevpon. God remoues this ſcruple by promiſing that no ſuch danger ſhould happen on them as they imagined; if they would obey they ſhould not be dammaged by it. Now foraſmuch as the like obiections are made by vnbelievers againſt every part of Gods ſervice, to the end to ſhift off from themſelues a neceſſitie of Obedience; and alſo becauſe God deales alike at all times towards his faithfull ſervants; which ſetting aſide all by-reſpects readily obey his will, By the rule of proportion, from this particular we deduce this Generall. *Doct.* 1.

That God ſuffers no men to ſuſtaine hurt and loſſe in regard of their obedient performance of ſuch things as hee commands them. The ſecond is this.

Experience of the Truth in ſome of Gods promiſes, ſhould confirme our faith in the beliefe of others. *Doct.* 2.

The deduction is alſo manifeſt, God commands the Iſra-

elites to beleiue that he will ouer-rule the hearts of their enemies, and keepe them from annoying of their country when they are buſied about Gods worſhip: why? becauſe he would caſt out their enemies, becauſe he would enlarge the bounds of their country after their enioying it: now theſe promiſes they ſhould ſee manifeſtly accompliſhed ſhortly after they came into the land of Canaan; for now they were in the wilderneſſe when this precept was giuen them, and therefore they had reaſon to beleiue that God would be as good as his word in this promiſe for their defence, as he would be for their Plantation in that countrey. Hence the point is.

Triall in one thing ſhould cauſe truſt in God for all other matters. Of theſe in order.

1 *That none ſhall be a looſer by his obedience to God.* For confirmation of this truth obſerue theſe reaſons.

R. 1. The firſt reaſon is drawne from the truth and faithfulneſſe of God in as many promiſes as he hath made in the Scriptures, ſetting forth his aboundant reward of faithfull obedience. It were an endleſſe thing to name vnto you all, or the moſt of theſe promiſes. I ſhall therefore only direct you to the ſerious meditation vpon theſe Scriptures, *Deut.* 28. *Pſal.* 37, and 128. wherein whatſoeuer is good for the Soule, the Body, the Eſtate, the Name, the Poſteritie of Man, all is promiſed vnto them that feare God and obey his commandements; in all which God is faithfull and true to performe what he promiſeth, if wee be carefull to obey.

R. 2 The ſecond is from his mercy and bountie, wherein he is rich vnto all, and aboue all to ſuch as feare and obey him. By which meanes God prouides as for his owne glorie, ſo for our ſingular incouragement in his ſervice. He will not haue his ſervants to complaine that they ſerue a hard Maſter, one that doth ill prouide for the aduancement and welfare of his ſervants: that his ſervice is of much hazard, full of trouble, moleſtation, and painfulneſſe, but of little

profit

profit and comfort. This were a dishonour to God: wherefore God will make it appeare that he commands not ouer vs for our hurt, nor makes vse of our service without a bountifull reward for our labour. If he bid vs doe any thing 'tis that we may gaine by it, as well as himselfe. His glory and our happinesse goe both together: nay, was there ever any who sought to glorifie God by his obedience, but God made him happy in the reward of it?

R. 3. Thirdly, the last shalbe frō the power of God, whereby he is able to giue every good thing to his servants; and to shield them from all evill things. Whatsoeuer is worth the hauing, that God hath in his gift as Soueraigne Lord to distribute all the goodnesse which is in himselfe or in his Creatures, where, and in what manner hee himselfe pleaseth. Againe, hee hath vnder his commande the forces of all Creatures in Heauen and in Earth, which hee ruleth as hee pleaseth to his owne purposes. Hee can at ease frustrate the harmefull intentions, and noisome qualities of the worst of them. Hee can at any time turne their malice into mercie, yea he is able to bring forth glory to himselfe, and profit to his servants not only against, but even out of their mischievous designements. This shall suffice for proofe of this point, which needs not so much confirmation to convince vs of the truth of it, as perswasion to moue vs to apply it to our practise, I will therefore come to the application of it after I haue in few words cleared a doubt or twaine, the solution whereof will farther illustrate the pont it selfe.

Q. 1 The first question is, *What is to bee thought of those that suffer evill for the service of God?* We see it is generally the condition and lot of the godly to haue very hard measure in this world, if any sit downe by the losse 'tis common ly they. *He that refraineth himselfe from evill maketh himselfe a prey*; it was and will be true to the worlds end: a godly man is a faire marke whereupon to discharge all the malice and mischiefe of the world; and a goodly pleasant mat-

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ter it is to the Divell, and men to heape all iniuries that may be vpon the head of so hatefull a person as is in their accopt a faithfull servant of God: how then is it true that Gods service brings vs no dammage? I answere briefly to this doubt three things.

A. 1 That such evills as befall the good and godly come vpon them ordinarily, not for their diligence, but negligence in the seruice of God. Even they haue their faults, their pride, their securitie, their vnbeliefe, their prophanesse in Gods worship, their covetousnesse, and then no marvell if they smart for it. God lets loose the tongues of railers to scourge their name, he vnbindes the hands of robbers to spoile their goods: hee giues Satan libertie to afflict their soules; he himselfe hides his face from them, & in wofull plight they are, till in their affliction they turne to the Lord, and repent of their evill doings. Servants when they grow lazie, and wicked need correction more then Protection; and so is it betweene God and vs; if once we growe vnfaithfull he hath an hand to smite vs, as well as to defend vs, a rod as well as a crooke & he loues vs so well that he will not spare our iniquities, but lay it on vs, *that being chastened by him we might not bee condemned with the world.* 1. Cor. 11. 32.

2 God doth dispose of things thus in great wisdome when even the best fare many times worst, to try the soundnesse of their zeale, their faith, their patience, &c. God will know whether men that professe much loue of him will bee contented to beare a little losse for his sake, or whether they will forsake his service, when peace, wealth, & credit in the world forsake them. God will also make the world knowe that he hath servants in the world which serue him not for full baggs, high titles, large possessions, well furnished tables, bodily ease and *a whole skinne* (As Satan most malitiously accused holy *Iob, ch.* 1.) but men that serue him out of loue & faithfulnesse, men that are resolued to follow him through

povertie, disgrace, hunger, nakednesse and perills, yea to open their breasts to the sword of the murtherers and to giue their bodies to the flames, if it may be to doe God or his gospell credit. Now other things be but small losses, my brethren, when God and his grace in vs gaines so much honour.

3 Those losses which at any time happen for Gods cause, God at another time makes them good: they are not losses so much as layings out, which after a patient forbearing a while come home with interest, commōly in the same kind, or which is much better with aboundance of grace here, & a greater weight of glorie in the life to come. This is plaine in that answere our Saviour makes to his Disciples, *Math.* 19.28.29, (*Behold*, saith *Peter*, in the name of all the rest, *wee haue forsaken all and followed thee; what therefore shall wee haue?* *ver.*27. Christ answers, neither they nor any others should be loosers by him, he would make them also sufficient amends, whosoeuer should sustaine dammage and trouble for his sake, [*verily I say vnto you* (saith Christ) *that when the sonne of man shall sit on the throne of his maiestie, ye which follow me in the regeneration, shall sit also vpon twelue thrones and iudge the twelue Tribes of Israel.*] A large recompence if wee marke it. Poore Fisher-men that had forsaken a few Boats, and Nets, and Cabbins, and other such meane tackling of their trade and liuelyhood, to attend vpon Christ in his busines, to be thus rewarded with Thrones and Iudgement-Seats, when Christ shall come in his glory. But this is the disciples priviledg; there followes a promise for all other. (*And whosoeuer shall forsake houses, or brethren, or Sisters, or father or mother, or wife or children, or lands, for my names sake & the Gospell, he shall receiue a hundredfold more, now at this present; houses, and brethren, and sisters, and Mothers, & children, & lands with persecution* (marke that condition) *with persecution:*) *& in the world to come shall inherite everlasting life. Mar.*10.20. Loe then nothing is lost, that

is neglected for Gods cause: he will be accomptable to satisfie for all troubles, losses, inconveniences whatsoeuer that we shall runne into by reason of our faithfull obedience vnto his commandements. Thus much of the first question; the next is,

Q. 2 Whether wee may neglect the businesse of our calling to imploy our selues in the seruice of God.

For if Gods seruice be so full of gaine and aduantage it seemes we haue a faire warrant to leaue much of the imploiments of our seuerall vocations, that so we might spend the more time in Gods seruice.

A. Whereto I answere, that wee may not doe so, because that our generall callings to be Christians, and our particular callings in a ciuill life doe not crosse one another but are subordinate and serviceable one to another.

Religion is that which brings a blessing vpon our ciuill vocation, and this againe is the ordinary meanes of obtaining that blessing. Our ciuill vocation is the standing wherein we are to shew forth the fruits of our Religion & to approue our selues to be indeed good Christians, by being honest Tradesmen, iust Magistrates, painefull ministers, &c. so that we may not neglect one calling for another, seeing God is serued & glorified by our faithfull discharge of both alike, and therefore *wee must abide*, as the *Apostle* commands vs, 1 Cor. 7. 20. *in that vocation wherein we are called*, not shifting from one to another, not taking liberty to be idle in our particular lawfull imploi nents, that so wee may be diligent in Gods seruice. Wherefore they are iustly to be reproued not only, who vtterly forsake all imploiments of this life, to the end they may wholy consecrate themselues to spirituall deuotion, but such also who though they forsake not vtterly, yet neglect more then is fit, their ciuill vocations. It is either way a misguided zeale either to withdraw ones selfe from humane society, neglecting all seruice to our neighbour vnder a pretence of more deuout seruice to God, as Popish Vota-

Votaries vſe to doe or as many doe, who grow careleſſe of their lawfull affaires, whiles they buſy themſelues about exerciſes of religion. I would be loath to diſcourage any man for his forwardneſſe in matters of religion; I know well we ſhall finde every where ten monſtr ouſly prophane, to one indiſcreetly zealous: yea a hundred that neglect Gods ſervice to follow their owne buſines, for one that doth otherwiſe. Yet giue me leaue to tell you that there is a fault among ſome in the world, who ſuffer dammage not ſo much by Gods ſervice, as by their owne indiſcretion, whiles by vnneceſſary iournies, conferences, entertainments, and ſuch like occaſions touching matters of religiõ, they put all their neceſſary buſineſſe out of order. If ſuch men ſuffer decaie in their eſtates; they muſt blame themſelues. Religion is not in the fault, which where it is truly taught teacheth man prudence, how to order his eſtate with iudgement. The want whereof giues occaſion to moſt to imagine that the greateſt part of ſuch mens religion lies in their eares, becauſe they loue to heare much but not to doe. This fault ſhould be amended where it is to be found, to the end that religion be not ſcandalized as a profeſſion that doth impoveriſh men. I confeſſe it is not an eaſie matter to giue generall rules that may befit all callings and conditions of life, to proportion out the times of Gods ſervice; and our owne imploiments, yet theſe things I ſhall commend to your conſiderations.

1 That in parting our time betweene religious and civill affaires, wee ſhall doe beſt to follow Gods own directions, who hath allotted a larger proportion to our owne temporall buſineſſe then to his ſpirituall ſervice; ſixe daies for thoſe; one day for this. Not but that he muſt haue the glory of ſome time, and all the buſineſſes of every day; but on the ſeaventh day he requires wee ſhould more immediatly and wholy intend his ſervice. And know this for a truth, that could reaſon or Gods command perſwade people to

harken to Gods counsell, diligently and seriously to attend all the duties of Gods worship vpon the Lords day, they should finde a larger increase of grace and better successe in their affaires by that one meanes well vsed, the now by many neglected.

2 You may obserue a diuersity in mens callings: some afford more leasure, some lesse. Where more may be spared it cannot be better bestowed then vpon God to glorifie him, and vpon a mans owne soule to saue it; but where lesse may be spared, something yet may be set apart for religion. This is certaine, there is no calling of neuer so busie imploiment, but enough time may be spared for some good duties without hinderiug the world, and enough preserved for the world without robbing of God, were we wise to doe well, did not couetousnesse, voluptuousnes and other vile affections befoole vs, and make vs vnthankfull vnthrifts of this shortnesse of life and grace, were our eyes cleared vp, that wee could looke perfectly into the end of all things, reason and religion would teach vs, that much of our time would be spent better then it is. Surely men will say hereafter how much better had it beene, had I spent such an hower in praier which I wasted in idlenesse; such a night in examining my heart vpon my bed, and watering my couch with my teares of repentance, which I spent in revelling, gaming, and other vngodly practises; how much better had it beene if I had gone to the house of God, when at such a time I went about needlesse disports; that such a day had beene spent in praier and fasting, which was passed away in complements of visitation, and entertainments. Bmt wee trifle away our time, and then complaine we want time for Gods service; & service of our callings. The seruice of our lusts haue eaten vp that which was to be bestowen vpon God, and the remainder the world must haue that. Wherefore let vs learne wisedome, and seeing wee can almost at any time finde an houre, halfe a day, a whole day, or more to spare from our busi-

buſineſſes for by matters, let vs doe as much for God as wee will doe for the world, and beſides the ſeauenth day which is his owne let vs giue him ſomewhat of the ſixe other, an houre to heare a Sermon as well as twaine to our ſelues to ſit idlelie or ill imploied; to ſpend halfe an houre in prayer, reading, meditation, as well as three houres at a feaſt; to ſpare once a quarter a daie for the humiliation of thy ſoule in faſting, prayer, and examination of thy ſinnefull heart as well as thou ſpareſt odde daies enough for thy pleaſure. This were wiſdome and ſpirituall thriftines; and bee bold on it, my brethren, that things being thus ordered with moderation and godly diſcretion, much time will bee gained for Gods ſervice without croſſing or hindering of our worldly affaires. Thus much of theſe queſtions; now let vs come to make ſome application of the point to our practiſe.

Vſe. 1. The firſt is for the diſcoverie and reproofe of thoſe evill thoughts and practiſes of men who iudge the ſervice of God to be an vnprofitable and dangerous imploiment. Manie there are that thinke as that evill & ſloathfull ſervant ſpake, *Mat.* 25.24. (*Maſter I knew thou waſt a hard man*) in moſt mens eſtimation God is a hard Maſter, that lookes for much labour and paies but ſmall wages. This corrupt opinion of God and his worſhip is an old feſtered ſore in the heart of man deeply ſetled in his thoughts, and not ſeldome bliſtering out vpon his tongue. (*Your words haue beene ſtout againſt mee*) ſaith the Lord to the Iewes in Malachie his time. *Mal.* 3.13.14. (and wherein had they *ſpoken ſtubbornely againſt him? Ye haue ſaid* (ſaith God) *it is in vaine to ſerue God, & what profit is it that we haue kept his commandements and walked humbly before the Lord of Hoſts. Therefore wee count the proud bleſſed, even they that worke wickedneſſe are ſet vp; and they that tempt God yea they are deliuered*) See the rancour of a corrupt heart venting it ſelfe in foule accuſations againſt God & his goodneſſe, as if he were one that

had no reſpect at all to his faithfull ſeruants, but one that
favoured his foes more then his friends. Such is ſtill the
ſottiſh iudgment of the world, that it is a thankles office to
obey God Almighty: they coũt noe time ſo vnprofitably ſpẽt
as that which is beſtowed vpon his ſervice, euen the godly
in a fit of diſcontent are apt to thinke ſo. *David Pſ.73.13.*
(verily I haue cleanſed my heart in vaine.) Baruch. Ier.45.3.
no courſe ſo vnlikely to thriue by, to liue happily or hono-
rably in the world as that which God counſels them to:
no men ſo deſpicable, and miſerable as thoſe who deſire to
be what they are named, Chriſtians. Mens practiſes eaſily
diſcouer, that in their hearts they are come to deſperate
reſolutions, as that impious fellow. 2 *King.6.33. (ſhould I*
attend on God any longer?) perſwade men all that you can
to a religious obſervation of reading the word, inſtructing
their ſeruants and children as is to be done in Chriſtian fa-
milies; ſhew them Gods commandements, tell them of his
promiſes that in doing theſe things God will bleſſe both
ſoule and body, goods and good name: and marke their an-
ſwers. Alas they are but poore men, it is one day in a
weeke loſſe to them, they muſt worke, or elſe wife and chil-
dren will be ill provided for: they cannot liue by hearing of
ſermons; religion will not buy foode or raiment, they haue
their hands full of buſineſſe, and ſhould they ſpend halfe an
houre in a morning and ſo much at evening for praier and
devotion, all would runne to wracke, their worke would
want their ſervants, and their ſervants would want their
ſleepe; they haue ſome ſpeciall buſines which cannot bee
compaſſed in the weeke, wherefore they muſt make bold
with God, and borrow what they never meane to pay, it
muſt and ſhall be done on the Lords day, elſe they ſhould
wrong themselues and ſet all out of ſquare. Tell men that
God abhorres falſhood, that a little with equitie is better
then bagges full of coſenage and deceipt; they'le anſwere
you, that is not the way to thriue, they wote well that plain
dealing

dealing is a iewell & God likes well of it, but they doe giue you to vnderſtand that hee that vſeth it ſhall die a begger. Wherefore they muſt lie and coſen, and doe as the world doth or elſe they are ſure wealth will come in but ſloly. Perſwade men to be mercifull to the poore, to feed the hungry, cloath the naked, helpe the decaied that their hearts may bleſſe them, and that God may bleſſe them in themſelues & their poſteritie: you ſhall haue from them ſuch ſpeeches as theſe; I know the fore part of my life, but not the end, the world is hard, trade decaies, I grow old, I may come to wãt where now I giue, a bird in the hand is worth two in the Buſh, I am ſure of what I haue, I cannot tell what I ſhall haue; I haue many to prouide for, wee muſt liue every man vpon his owne; with a great deale of ſuch cold water, which men vſe to caſt vpon thoſe few ſpackles of Charity that's left in them, vtterly to quench it. Thus God may promiſe or commande what he will, but moſt of vs are at a point with him, wee will doe but what we liſt, thinking with our ſelues it is no boote to belieue what he promiſeth, or obey what he commandes. The ground of this perverſnes of mens opinions and practiſes touching our obedience to God is, that infidelity which is rooted in our Natures and growen vp with vs even from the wombe; that poiſon which the ſerpent powred forth into the mindes of our firſt Parents, *viz.* that God did not meane fairely towards them hath ever ſince deeply infected our natures making vs ſtill to haue God in a jealouſie & ſuſpition, that he wil not do what he ſaith; when he bids vs obey & makes promiſe vpon promiſe that all ſhall be well with thẽ that feare him, much a do we haue to take God vpõ his word, we forecaſt a thouſand perils: if we doe ſo there is danger, if ſo yet there we are not ſafe neither: we begin to argue how this or that can be, whẽ & which way I ſhall be bleſſed as God ſaith I ſhall. And after a great deale of quarelling & diſputing, in the end we fall to this concluſion, that it's good to truſt God no farther thẽ

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we ſee him. We may euery one read his own thoughts in the practiſe of men recorded for our obſeruation in the Scriptures. Take a few Examples, 2 *Chro.* 25. we read that Amaziah hauing hired 100000 men of Iſrael to goe with him againſt the Edomits he was forbidden by the prophet of God to let the Army of Iſrael goe with him to battle, for if he did he ſhould ſurely looſe the victory; if he obeyed he ſhould conquer. Here now Amaziah is in a ſtraight whether hee ſhould follow the counſell of the man of God or his owne; (*but what ſhall we doe* (ſaith he) *for the hundred talents which I haue giuen to the Army of Iſrael ver.* 9.) yea this ſtucke in his ſtomacke, he could willingly doe as God bids him, but he ſhall looſe an hundred talents by the bargaine, and that is a great matter, wherefore the King could finde in heart to adde obſtinacie to his folly, & as at firſt he had hired them againſt Gods good liking, ſo now to retaine them contrarie to his expreſſe commande, and to hazard & looſe Gods fauour and aide in that iourne rather then the loſſe of one hundred Talents; and doubtleſſe ſo he had done, had not the Prophet beene earneſt with him, and confirmed him by perſwading him to truſt to Gods power and reſt himſelfe contented; (*the Lord*, ſaith he, *ſhall giue to thee much more then this*) in the ſame verſe. Againe in the 25, of *Levit.* wee read that God gaue this law to the Iſraelites that ſixe yeares they ſhould ſow their land & dreſſe their vinyards, but every ſeaventh yeare the land ſhould reſt; they ſhould not ſow their corne, nor reap that which growed of it ſelfe, they ſhould not cut their vines, nor gather their grapes that grew that yeare, as it is from ver. 2. to the 8. of that Chap. Doubt ye not but this ſeemeth a ſtrãge cõmand to this diſtruſtfull people, and that they were very hardly brought to obey it, even as many of vs would doe in the like caſe. What? muſt all tillage ceaſe? muſt no regard be had for the fruit of the earth for euery 7th yeare? why this is the direct way to ſtarue vs all? What if harueſt & vintage proue bad in the ſixe yeares what

ſhall

shall we haue to liue vpó in the two yeares after? what if the eighth yeare proue naught then belike we must liue three yeares vpō one yeares proviſiō; thus a famine shalbe brought vpon the land in all likelihood; it is not to bee doubted but many of them, notwithstanding Gods Cōmandement, would haue the plough in the ground, and their pruning hookes at their vines, wee knowe what they did in the like case. *Exod.* 16. God bad them keepe none of the Manna they gathered one day till the next, but yet they did keepe it doubting whether there would be any on the next morning to be had *v.* 19. 20. God bad them gather none vpon the Sabboth day but that which they gathered on the sixth day should suffice for two daies, yet for all that they will trie; and though God say expreslie yee shall finde none, yet perhaps it's otherwise, they must abroad to see if any thing bee to be had, *v.* 25. 26. 27. 28. 29. so extreamly hard it is to perswade men to Obedience when there is any hope of gaine, or feare of losse that may moue them to the contrary. Wherefore to prevent such cavils as the Israelites might make against the aforenamed Cōmandement touching the rest of the seauenth yeare God himselfe in the aforesaid *Ch. v.* 18. 19. 20. 21. 22. answers the matter (*therefore yee shall doe my statutes & keep my Commandements and doe them and yee shall dwell in the land in safety, &c.*) Take yet one example more, namely the Leviticall worship of God inioined to these Iewes standing in much expence of time in regard of so many Sabboths, new Moones, and other solemne times to bee obserued, also requiring no small charge in the performance of it, in regard of so many Sacrifices and Oblations to bee made. Could now these covetous and vnbeleeuing people spare so much time or cost vpon God Almightie? Heare what God saith of them concerning the one *Amos* 8. 5. (*when will the new moone be gone that we may sell corne? and the Sabboth that we may set forth wheat, making the Ephah small and the shekel great, and falsifying the ballances by de-*

ceit) Theſe were their thoughts if not their words touching the time allotted to Gods ſervice. Iuſt as men now adayes. Theſe Sundaies thinke they, is time clearely loſt; wee might haue gained thus many pence or pounds had it not that Sunday came in and hindred our buſineſſe, wee wiſh it gone that wee were at our Trading againe. Likewiſe for the other to wit the charges they were put to in Sacrifice and offerings; heare what God reports of their practiſes in that matter *Mal.* 1.13. See the couetouſneſſe and infidelity of that wretched people who thinke any thing is good enough for God: faire and fat Lambes, and ſheep, and Oxen, & Calues without ſpot, and blemiſh (as was required in Sacrifices) Oh this was too much charges; was it not pitty to burne ſuch good Cattle, and part with them for nothing? Sell them rather and make money of them; as for the Altar and the Prieſt; any leane, ſtarueling, that's naught worth ſhall ſerue the turne well enough. Iuſt as many men doe in ſetting their Children to ſeverall profeſſions, chooſe out the faireſt and moſt hopefull, and beſtow one vpon the Law, another vpon Phyſicke, another vpon Merchandize, or ſome other courſe whereby they may ſpeedily riſe to wealth and greatneſſe in the world. But now if there be ever a deformed Impe in body, minde, and manners, plant him in the Miniſtry; and why? They thinke God deſerues the worſt ſervants, becauſe they deeme him the worſt maſter; in whoſe Service there is leaſt credit and hope of Preferment to bee found.

For to end this vſe, let vs a little obſerue the inſtance here in our Text touching their repairing to the place of his worſhip three times a yeare: It is evident that the Precept in this kinde was very ill obſerved at all times by the Iews. Happily at their firſt plantation in Canaan when the great workes of God were yet freſh in their memories, their Faith in the promiſes kept them ſomewhat from the neglect of the Precept: How be it after the ſetting vp of the Tabernacle

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in Shiloh, when all Israel met together for that purpose *Ioſh.*8,1. wee doe not finde expreſſe mention made of the generall keeping of the Paſſeouer, till the daies of Hezekiah and Ioshuah. That theſe yearely aſſemblies were obſerued by the godly Israelites appeares by the example of Elkanah. 1.*Samuel*,1.3. and likewiſe that they were not left vtterly vnfrequented by the ordinary multitude appeares by that counſell which Ieroboam tooke. 1. *King.* 12. 26. 27. 28. fearing leaſt if the people ſhould yearely goe vp to Ieruſalem they would at one time or other remember their duty towards the houſe of *David*, and ſo revolt from him. For preventing of which miſchiefe that wicked king (not truſting Gods word) who by *Ahiiah* had promiſed if hee would be obedient as was *David*, God would build him a ſure houſe like vnto *Davids.* 1.*King.*11.38. (*Perſwaded the people that it was too much labour to reſort from all quarters ſo farre as to Ieruſalem; they ſhould take a ſhorter cut to the golden calues at Dan, and Bethel.*) Whereby it appeares that as theſe ſolemnities were obſerued by many, though not by the vniverſall multitude of all the males, ſo were they never obſerued before, or after, the diviſion of the kingdome. Which is plaine by that which is recorded touching the Paſſeouer kept in *Hezekiahs* time, 2. *Chron.* 30. where the Paſſeover was proclaimed throughout all Israell to bee kept at Ieruſalem, for ſaith the Text, *verſ.*5. (*They had not done it a long time in ſuch ſort as it was written*) At which time though much people, a very great congregation from all parts met together, as it is, *ver.*13. yet t'was not obſerved of all: the Idolatrous Israelites ſcorning and mocking at the meſſenger that publiſhed *Hezekiahs* decrees, *ver.* 10. Moreover touching the Paſſeouer kept after this in *Ioſiah* his time, the Scripture ſaith expreſly. 1. *Kings*, 23,22. (*Surely there was not ſuch a Paſſeover holden ſince the daies of the Iudges that iudged Iſrael, nor in all the daies of the kings of Iudah, nor of the kings of Iſrael.*) See alſo 1.*Chron.*35.18.

This is a thing very remarkable that notwithstanding so expresse a promise in this place, that yet so great negligence should creepe into so principall a part of the worship of God as the obseruation of the Passeouer. But, my brethren, in this and those other examples we see that which daily experience shewes to be true, that it is a matter passing difficult to obey God when carnall reason suggests that there is apparent likelihood of gaine by not doing, or of losse by doing what he commands vs:

Vse. 2. 2 The second vse shall be for exhortation to fidelitie and constancie in Gods seruice, because we shall be no loosers by it, if God bid thee, doe it whatsoeuer come of it, for euill it cannot be; if he forbid thee, dare not to do it what euer hopes thou hast to gaine by it, for it will never proue well; cast off fleshly policie, lay no doubts in the way, put no cases, doe Gods worke and rest secure of his reward. Feare not Diuels, God commands ouer them: feare not men, God hath their hearts in his hand, he can perswade, hee can force them: feare not the Creatures, windes and weather, seas and land, heaven and earth wait on him to doe his pleasure, feare nothing whilest thou feares God and obeyest him: If thou pleasest him, all things shall serue thee for thy comfort. Heare then, beloued, learne to get Faith, learne to liue by Faith and not sense: looke not vnto appearances, but to the promises: when thou seest no meanes to escape evill say, yet God doth, whose wisdome and faithfulnesse I dare trust. Read the Scriptures, meditate vpon the promises, and then know that God is no niggard, nor cruell Master that vseth our labour without paying; know that he is neuer behinde hand with vs. (*Who is there euen among you that would shut the doores for nought, or kindle a fire at my Altar for nought. Mal.* 1.10.) Nay hee giues a pound for a penny-worth, and if thou wilt duely reckon all thy service, thy aduentures, thy losses on the one side, and thy gaines on the other: at the foot of thy score thou maist write it downe for

for a *summa totalis* (*Godlines is to me great gaine.* 1 *Tim.* 6. 6.) Be perswaded then to set your selues resolutely to the Obedience of Gods commandements, heare much, pray much, liue holily, deale iustly, be constant in Religion, feare no hazard, venture all, Credit, Goods, Life for Gods cause; venture all, care not for the worlds Censure, what they thinke of thee and thy estate feare thou God, and thinke of his name, and remember that God promised that one day shall come (*In which men shall discerne betweene the Righteous and the wicked, betweene him that serueth God, and him that serueth him not Mal.* 3. 18.) then they that thinke God now hath forgotten his Servants shall know that there is no vnfaithfulnesse in the almighty, but that he is as hee hath ever promised to be a sure God, a bountifull rewarder of his Obedient Seruants.

The last vse is for admonition on the contrarie side, *Vse* 3. that if wee loose nothing by the service of God wee shall certainly get nothing by the service of sinne and Satan. Let a man that hath gained much by vsury, bribery, Cousenage and such other vngodly practises, but cast vp middle and both ends, and in conclusion he shall finde, that hee may put his gaine in his eyes, and see never the worse. Thou hast slowed Gods service to follow thy owne imploiments. Thou hast forsaken the counsell of God, and followed the plots of thine owne contrivance. Thou hast spared from God, from Religion: from the poore, to the end not to wrong thy selfe. Now reckon at the yeares end at thy liues end what's the gaine of all this, & thou shalt see that Gods curse hath blasted all these thy fleshly Policies and practises, and they are vanished into smoke and emptines. Ieroboam will make sure the Crowne vpon his Head, and the Kingdome to his Posteritie, but it shall not be by Gods meanes *viz.* the maintenance of his worship and Service, but by a tricke of his owne deviſing Ieroboam will set vp Idols, and what gets he by that but the shame and

destruction of himselfe and his posteritie? The coveteous Iewes would not spare the fat Cattle for Sacrifices; what saue they by that? not much; they haue sheepe and get Gods curse vpon it and themselues too *Mal.* 1. 14. (*Cursed be the deceiuer, &c.*

In a word get what thou canst get, if thou gaine not Gods favour, 'tis not a sauing bargaine, I will not be thy halver. He makes an ill match that winnes the world and looseth God and his owne soule. Wherefore to end let vs reforme our Iudgements touching our service to God and our seruice of sinne: know we henceforth that noe course is so thriving as that; none so vnprosperous as this. Pray wee for the Publike, that the peace of our State may be alwaies as it is founded vpon the purity of Religion: endeavour for our private, to provide for the Peace of our Consciences, the happines of our liues, the salvation of our soules by our faithfull and constant obedience vnto the Gospell Let vs liue by faith, and let our eyes be fixed vpon the Crowne of Glorie prepared for vs, and then wee shall see that there is no service to bee compared to the service of this great King, who of seruants will one day make vs Kings to raigne with him for euermore.

FINIS.

Canticles, or Solomons song. 2. 16.

My beloved is mine, and I am his: he feedeth among the Lillies.

IN the former part of this Chapter as in the whole song throughout, the Holy Ghost hath described vnto vs vnder most excellent similitudes the great loue that is betweene Christ and his Church; that is, everie faithfull soule. This loue appeares, 1 in the mutuall commendations one of another. 2 in the mutuall desire of one vnto the fellowship of the other. The praises which Christ giues vnto the Church are, that the Church (the companie of the faithfull) hath a wonderfull excellencie aboue all other societies in the world. *Like a lillie amongst the thornes so is my loue amongst the daughters.*) All the states and societies of men vpon the earth being compared to the Church they are but like thornes vnto Lillies, and Roses without all beauty & delight, vnpleasant & harmefull Plants. The praise which the church giues to Christ is answerable to the former: namely that among all persons of the world he only it is that brings comfort and helpe vnto her. (*Like the apple-tree among the trees of the forrest, so is my welbeloued among the sonnes of men.*) Men & Angels with all their glory, and

vers. 2.

vers. 3.

and greatneſſe are but barren trees compared to Chriſt: they bring no grace, no glory, no peace, no protection to the Church, only Chriſt is that appletree whoſe boughs are full laden, with that ſpirituall fruit which is that which the Act.4.12. Apoſtle ſpeaks in other termes (*Neither is there ſaluatiō in any other, for among men there is no other name giuen wherby we muſt be ſaued*) Thus mutually Chriſt preferrs the Church, the Church Chriſt before all. The great ioy which is betweene them, one to enioy the other followes at large in the next verſes. The Church deſireth alway to enioy Chriſts favour and protection, his graces to be beſtowed vpon her, his power and Spirit to comfort her and ſupport her, in the fellowſhip of Chriſt ſhee profeſſeth to be true ioy and contentment (*I ſate downe vnder his ſhadow with great delight,* verſ.3. *and his fruit was ſweete vnto my taſt.*) The grace of God and his protection is all her deſire and delight, as it is further amplified vnto the 8th verſe. The deſire and affection of Chriſt to his Church is euery way as ardent as that of the Church to him. He is ready to anſwer her when ſhee calls vpon him, he makes ſpeede to come vnto her, to ſhew her his gratious preſence, to comfort her, he ſpeaks kindly vnto her, inviting her by all louing termes to come, and partake of all the abundant graces and comforts prepared for her, he tells her how well hee is pleaſed with her obedience, her praiers ſhee makes, her ſervices ſhe perſormes although in verſ.14. many imperfections and afflictions, (*Let mee ſee thy counte-nance, let me heare thy voice, for ſweete is thy voice, and thy coũtenance pleaſant.*) Laſtly he teſtifieth his care of her ſafetie, that ſhee be not ſpoiled by foxes, Heretiques or other enemies that would lay her waſt. All which is largely expreſt from the 8th verſe to the 16th verſe. After the declaration of ſo great affection of the faithfull toward Chriſt, and of Chriſt toward them againe follow by way of concluſion, the words of my text giuing vs a ſhort ſumme of all together, *My beloued is mine and I am his he feedeth, &c.*

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In these words the Church briefly comprehends the whole Mysterie of that spirituall communion which shee hath with Christ, the gloriousnesse of it, the desire she hath to enioy it more fully. More distinctly obserue these particulars. First the title which the Church giues vnto Christ calling him her welbeloued, *my Welbeloued.* Secondly the communion or the fellowship, that is betweene Christ, and the Church. What is in Christ serues for the comfort of the Church; what in the Church, all is for the glory and honour of Christ (*he is mine and I am his*) This communion and mutuall intercourse of all good things betweene Christ, and the faithfull is amplified by two particulars. First the excellencie of it, in that it is full of all heavenly comfort, and sweetnesse [*he feedeth amongst the Lillies*] not in barren, and vnpleasant places, but in fruitfull and most pleasant Vallies, or Gardens stor'd with Lillies, and such other delights, there doth Christ feede his Church, noting vnto vs vnder those figures, the singular ioies which faithfull soules are partakers of, vnder the gratious goverment of Christ their Shepheard and Bishop; whose graces & favours are aboundantly communicated vnto them, things farre aboue the rarest and choisest delights that can be imagined. Secondly the vehement desire the Church hath to inioy this communion with Christ, perpetually during this life, & perfectly in the life to come. (*Vntill the day breake and the shadowes flee away, turne my beloued, and be like the Roe or the young Hart vpon the tops of the mountaines of Bether.*) Vnder which Allegorie the Church desireth, that which shee elswhere in plaine termes praieth for (*Come Lord Iesus, come quickly*) that like a Roe or an Hart, (that is) swiftly he would afford his assistance and presence, to relieue her in the time of her Warfare in this world (*till the night be past, and the shadows thereof be gone*) (that is) all such imperfections, afflictions, sinne, temptations, and miserie that be vpon her in this life be taken away (*when the day shall breake*) The day of Christs

Vers. 1. Chap. 6. 2.

Vers. 17.

Rev. 22. 20.

glorious coming which the Church ſhall enioy in all fulnes of happineſſe in the preſence of God and Chriſt for ever. This is the plaine reſolution and meaning of this Scripture, nor will I trouble this place with any further ſcruple about the words. I come rather to giue you ſome inſtruction for your practiſe. The firſt leſſon is from the title of (Welbeloued) tis this.

1. *Doct.* *That Chriſt is the only wel-beloued of a faithfull Chriſtian.* This is that which the Church ſo often repeats in this whole ſong, ſtiling Chriſt her faire one, her Beloued, her welbeloued, him whom her ſoule loueth, him whō ſhe only admires, of him ſhe talks, is neuer well but whē ſhe enioies his preſence. If you aske her now, *What is thy beloued more* Cap.5.9. *then another beloued?* ſhee can ſoone anſwere and tell vs wherefore it is, that all her affection is placed vpon Chriſt, ſuch excellencies there be in him, ſo much happines is there in her fellowſhip with him that none but he deſerues her entire true loue, and affection. Good reaſon then a faithfull ſoule ſhould loue Chriſt.

1. *Reaſon.* Firſt in regard of the excellencies that are in the perſon of Chriſt, he is in himſelfe moſt louely, and therefore deſerues moſt loue, all comlines is deformity if cōpared to the beauty that is in him, *he is the faireſt of ten thouſand*, nay *he is fairer* Ch.5.10. Pſal.45.2. *then all the children of men.* Cōſider him in his graces, cōſider him in his glory never any perſon more louely & amiable.

Ioh.3.34. Heb.1.9. 1 *For his graces* he is enriched with all the beauty of *holyneſſe, he hath receiued the ſpirit without meaſure, he is annointed with the oile of gladneſſe* (that is) *the holy Ghoſt*; and with power *aboue his brethren.* When he was vpon the earth how ſweete and louely was his carriage, how innocent and vnblameable, what man or Divell could charge him with the leaſt offence? Obedient he was in all things, to his Parents, Rulers, to Cæſar, to God. In every point he fulfilled all Righteouſneſſe to the leaſt title And Iot of the Law. Grace was powred into his lips, and from them into his heart:

heart, and the hearts of all them with whom he converſed in moſt divine and heavenly diſcourſes. Charitie fil'd his heart and from thence flowed forth on all that had need of helpe: he did good where twas not expected: he did good where t'was refuſed. What kindnes was done vnto him, but it returned vpō the head of the doer with abundant recompence What iniuries did he not paſſe by, and pardon? He endured a world of indignities, perſecutions, revilings, reproaches, and in the midſt of all is ſo farre from minding revenge, that he praies and weepes for his enimies, admoniſheth them with all meekeneſſe, heaps kindneſſes on them, & ſeekes by all meanes to overcome their evill by his goodnes. Goodnes is his whole nature, his whole life is nothing but a trade of doeing well, & ſuffering evill. Such was the ſweetnes of his nature and ſo affectionatly charitable was his heart, that no froward, and crooked perverſnes of ſcornefull, proud, gaineſaying, diſobedient men could turne away his deſires from doeing them good. In all this he was amiable as man, euen a man in abaſement and infirmity, yet then was he *glorious full of grace and truth*. But now looke on him *in his perſon and in his glory*, and theſe excellencies are redoubled, nay multiplied a thouſand fold. Conſider him *in his perſon*, and ſo they are infinite: *becauſe in him all the fulneſſe of the Godhead dwelleth bodily*, and the graces of God are his graces, becauſe he is God. Ioh. 1. 14. Coloſſ. 2. 9.

2 As *for his glory*, it is not for mortall eye to behold it, or tongue to tell it: he was abaſed, *but God hath highly exalted him aboue all names and dignities*: he hath made him head of the Angels who adore him; of the Church to rule it by his ſpirit, Ruler of the world to governe it by the ſcepter of his power; he is now ſate downe at the right hand of Maieſtie and Glory, the father having put into his hands all power in heaven and earth, and committed vnto him all power over Men and Angels. To which greatneſſe of his power is equall the glory of his perſon inveſted with the robes of Maieſtie, Phil. 2. 9.

brightnes, impossibility and all other excellences that can be imagined most excellent. When wee read the description of his transfiguration on the Mount, of his appearance to Saint Paul, to S^t Iohn, wee may conceiue a little what they saw. but 'tis hereafter that *wee shall see him as he is.* Now vnto all these graces; these glories of Christ ioine that which is the fountaine of all, from whence ye shall see the parts of his compleat excellencies. That now is the infinite loue of God the Father towards him his only Sonne. *He is his delight, his elect in whō his soule delighteth, his beloued sonne in whom he is well pleased*; so that if wee would seeke for a patterne of all excellencies, they were no where to be found, but only in him. No marvaile if the Church, the faithfull (whose eies are opened to behold those things in Christ) doe loue him, a person so beloued of God, so louelie in himselfe, so gratious, so glorious. But this is not all, they loue him also.

Mat. 17. Act. 9. Revel. 1. 1 Ioh. 3. 2.

Prov. 8. 3. Esa. 42 1. Mat. 3 17.

2. Reason. Secondly in regard of what he is to thē, vnto the church, Christ is all in all, what good she hath it is from him, what shee expects it is by him.

1 Frst in this life shee hath grace and protection, grace from his spirit, protection from his power, both from his Loue. The Church is sanctified by his spirit, hee baptizeth it with his spirit, washing the faithfull with cleane water from the filthinesse both of the flesh and spirit: he hath freed them from that loathsome vncleanesse of corrupted Nature, wherein the vngodly remain, polluted with all vnclean lusts, he sets them all at liberty from the bondage of sinne, of servants to sinne making them seruants to God in righteousnes, he liues in our hearts by faith, and changeth our sinfull natures into the likenesse of his most glorious nature by the powerfull workes of his spirit, sending life into vs who were wilde, and withered branches, that being quickned thereby, we might bring forth fruit according to God in all holinesse.

2 Se-

2 Secondly the Church is protected by the power of Christ from the malice of Sathan whether he act, plot, contriue destruction against whole Churches, or by temptations seeke to vndoe the soules, and salvation of private men. *Christ walketh in the middest of the Candlestickes, Revelat.* 1.20. he onely that hath placed them can remoue them: *hee hath his starres, his Ministers in his right hand*, where they shall bee safe; he hath all those that God hath giuen him in his keeping and none shall plucke them from him, all are kept safe to that everlasting kingdome. In peace hee is the glory of his Church, in trouble the safetie of it: if she be in the wilderneſſe, he is the Angell that goes before her to giue her rest, if shee be persecuted he hath a wilderneſſe whereto she may flee, there be clefts and holes in the rocke wherein she shall be hid, and if the Dragon cast forth whole flouds of malice to overwhelme her, the earth shall open her mouth, & swallow vp the flouds, if shee be invaded with Armadoes he can blow with his breath, and they shall sinke into the bottome of the deepe like lead; if vnder-mined by a Powder-plot, he can bring to light the deeds of darkneſſe, and saue his anointed and his people, by a deliverance as wonderfull as the act intended. In a word his heart is vpon his Church & faithfull people, their sorrowes he thinks vpon, their afflictions are his afflictions, hee is pained when they are persecuted, in every distreſſe hee is neere at hand to afford succour: in health to saue them from sickneſſe; in sicknes to saue them from death: in trouble of estate and paine of body, to preserue them from a disquiet minde, in anguish of soule to vphold from fainting by despaire. In life to saue them from a thousand deaths, in death it selfe to deliuer them from that death, which is to come. Thus is Christ beneficiall to vs in this life.

But in the life to come he bestowes glory on the Church: the Saints shall be made perfectly righteous, perfectly glorious like vnto himselfe: where hee is, there they shall bee for

ever to behold his glory, to be partakers of his ioy.

You see then that Christ every way deserues all our loue, seeing he is not only most excellent in himselfe, but hath also done most good vnto vs. Whence it is no wonder if every faithfull soule conclude as it is in this booke often, that
Chap.1.13. Chap.5.16. *Christ is to it as a bundle of Myrrh, a cluster of Camphire, that he is faire and pleasant and wholy delectable.* Let vs now make some vse to our selues of this point.

*Vse.*1. The first vse shalbe for a reproofe of mens mis-guided affections, who loue any thing better then Christ; they are baptized into the name of Christ, count it an honour to bee called Christians, and if you will believe them they expect to be saued by Christ, yet if a man looke into their practises, they'le appeare to any that can iudge, that they thinke of nothing lesse, care for nothing lesse then Christ. That which the Church confesseth of her owne negligence whereinto
Chap.1.6. she was mis-led, (*They made me keeper of the vines but I kept not mine owne vine.*) shee attended on the fancies and pleasures of others, but not on her owne welfare, this wee may apply vnto the prophanesse of most men, who haue Vines enough to keepe and dresse where about Sathan and their owne lusts haue set them on worke, but for that true Vine which is Christ Iesus, they take no pleasure at all, in resting themselues vnder his shadowe, or tasting his pleasant fruit. Men haue many things to busie their affections about, but while they tend other things they are vtterly careless of this one thing that is the chiefest. One man hath set vp preferment and greatnes in the world for the Idol which he worships, and all his time, meanes and thoughts are taken vp in prosecution of some plot whereupon hee hath contriued his farther advancement. Another wallowes in all base pleasure, and so long as hee can content the beastly part of himselfe, his sensuall desires; hee thinkes himselfe well-apaid, hee enioyes what he loues, and what needs hee more. Another loues nothing but mony and cattle, and trees, and earth, it is his

his happineſſe to ſay all this is mine, and when hee is amidſt thoſe things he is amidſt all his contentments. In ſhort, every man hath his welbeloued in ſome kinde or other; but it is not the beloued here ſpoken of. No (my brethren) theſe men loue not Christ ſay they what they will, they make little reckoning of him. Come to the triall of it and you ſhall ſee it ſo. The old ſaying's true, *Vbi Amor, ibi Oculus*, where we like, there we looke; or as Christ ſaith, *where our treaſure is there will our hearts be alſo, Mathew.6.21.* Conſider then your ſelues, in your thoughts what is it you moſt thinke of? Is it of Christ, of his excellencies, of his benefits? Can you take pleaſure in deſcribing to your ſoules the glorious and gracious qualities of his perſon, muſing attentiuely vpon ſuch admirable excellencies, ſo farre ſurpaſſing all that in this world can bee called either gracious or glorious? Are our hearts often warmed with heauenly ioy, when in our priuate meditations we recount with our ſelues what great things he hath done and will doe for our ſoules? To thinke how mightily hee hath wrought in vs by his ſpirit, to make vs aliue, and keep vs aliue, when we were once dead in ſins; how ſweetly he perſwades our will and ſtubborne affections to yeeld to obedience, how forcibly he aſſiſts vs againſt moſt powerfull temptations? Can we reioice to thinke what happineſſe we haue in his fauour, that he is a faithfull friend to vs in all our neceſſities, to whom wee may repaire for counſell and comfort? Doe his conſolations refreſh our ſpirits, that when ſinne wounds vs, his ſtripes heale vs, When Sathan accuſes vs, hee is our aduocate to plead for vs, when ſorrowes and paine are vpon vs, hee ſpeakes peace vnto our Soules, that in all wants & troubles wee can ſurely pray vnto him, and poure out our ſoules into his boſome who only giues them reſt? Doe we often meditate on that happineſſe he will one day bring vs vnto, when hee ſhall make vs like himſelfe, moſt glorious in our bodies, moſt righteous in our ſoules, moſt blisfull in all, and that for ever? Bee our

thoughts

thoughts(my brethren)on theſe things? Run our deſires and wiſhes this way? Oh what ſtrangers are ſuch meditations from moſt mens hearts! They thinke what they ſhall eate, what they ſhall put on, how they ſhall bring the yeare about, how they ſhall pay this debt, purchaſe that field, that houſe, prouide to raiſe ſuch a ſonne, to marry ſuch a daughter, to grow rich, to get high places, titles, and offices, how to follow their pleaſures and liue at hearts eaſe, how they may effect their wicked deſignes, oppreſſe a man, and his inheritance, reuenge ſuch wrongs as haue beene done them by their neighbours, and watch them an ill turne to be euen with them, yea theſe bee the great and mighty imploiments of mens thoughts, whereabout they buſie themſelues, and often breake their ſleepe, day and night, the whole weeke, the whole yeare, their mindes run vpon theſe things, when they be at Church at praier, in hearing, at any good exerciſe the heart ſtill wanders about ſuch matters, euen at this preſent. Is it not even ſo my brethren, which of vs can excuſe our ſelues, and ſay my heart is innocent? Conſider wee againe the practiſes of men, whether they will ſtand with the loue they profeſſe to Chriſt: we will doe much for one that we loue, eſpecially, if it bee one that can doe much for vs. Now what ſaith our Saviour. *If you loue mee keepe my Commandements. Ioh.* 14.15. If Chriſt be our beloued, his cõmandements muſt be ſo too. Whoſoever hates the law hates the Law-giver alſo. Take a view then of mens practiſes, and we ſhall ſee they make a very ſcorne of Chriſt, & of his cõmandements. Looke vpon them in their families, and you cannot finde any foot-ſteps of religion, no conſtant prayer morning and evening; no reading of the word, no inſtruction of children and ſervants, no duties of devotion whereby you ſhall knowe them from Papiſts, Atheiſts, or Infidels. See them in the publike worſhip of God, and there is nothing but negligence and prophaneſſe, ſeldome at Church if any buſineſſe elſe be to be done, and when they are there, they are careleſſe in

in praier, in hearing of the word read, or preached, nothing is remembred for which they are a iot the better. Looke vpon them in their priuate conuersation, and they are full of all vngodlineſſe, vnrighteouſnes, and vnſobernes, horrible ſwearers, that cannot ſpeake but they muſt blaſpheame, profane deſpiſers of Gods word, and worſhip, deriders of preaching and preachers, in a word, enemies to all godlines and piety of life, which by reproaches, and vnchriſtian reuilings; they ſeeke to blaſt in whōſoeuer they ſee it grow, extreamely ignorant, knowing nothing diſtinctly in matters of Religion, not able with any vnderſtanding to giue you a reaſonable account in any point of their faith. In ciuill dealing men that are vnfaithfull, vntruſty, vnmercifull in their carriage proud diſdainfull, luxurious, wanton and vncleane perſons. May wee beleiue ſuch men when they ſay Chriſt is their beloued? Surely we cannot though they ſhould ſweare it. What? loue Chriſt, yet not know him, except it be by his name; loue him? And yet deſpiſe his ſeruants, his ſeruice, his miniſters, make a ieſt at his word, & put off with a ſcoffe the counſells and rebukes which out of it are brought to them. Loue Chriſt? Yet ſet thy mouth againſt heauen, and in thy rage and helliſh fury diſcharge thy blaſpemies vpon his ſoule, his body, his blood, his wounds; his name, vpon all that is pretious in him, and not to be named but with deuotion. Wilt thou ſay thou loueſt Chriſt, when thou haſt no heart to thinke on him, to talke of him, to bee in his preſence, in the aſſemblies of Gods people in publike, at ſermon, at ſacraments, at priuate praiers? Is he thy friend? And yet art thou loath to haue any thing to doe with him, in ſuch places, in ſuch exerciſes? In fine wher's thy loue to Chriſt, whilſt I ſee thy vngodly life, whereby thou diſhonoureſt Chriſt, and ſhameſt the name of a Chriſtian? If by theſe practiſes wee ſhall know thy loue of him, whereby I marvaile ſhall wee know thy hatred of him. But, brethren, be not deceiued, God will not ſo be mocked, delude thy

ſelfe thou maiſt, but Chriſt thou canſt not with ſuch faire gloſſes: it is not him whom thou loueſt, it is ſomething elſe, thy pleaſures, thy wealth, thy luſts, the world, the Divell. Theſe be the things whereon thy affections dote, whereto thy deſires are faſtned, theſe things thou canſt ſerue, let them command any thing, thou art at a becke to doe it; it is thy felicitie to be imploied by them. If any will croſſe thee in theſe thy courſes, admoniſh thee, rebuke thee, perſwade thee, thou canſt not brooke them, thou counteſt them thine enimies, that thus trouble thee; when thou art entreated by thy loue to God, thy loue to Chriſt, thy loue to his word, by thy loue to his Miniſters, by thy loue to thine owne ſoule, by all things that are louely, and by all loues to deny vngodlineſſe and worldly luſts, and to liue righteouſly, ſoberly, and godly. Wouldſt thou not be perſwaded to reaſon; didſt thou indeed loue any of theſe, as in word thou profeſſeſt to doe? But when all admonitions, reprehenſions, exhortations, or whatſoeuer good counſell giuen in the name of Chriſt ſhall not yet be entertained for the loue of Chriſt, but fall vpon the heart like the hammer on the anvill, that ſtrikes but enters not, or like a ball from a wall bee ſmitten backe into the face of him that ſent it, with ſcorne and contempt of him, his meſſage, and his Miniſter too, ſay what thou wilt, thy tongue belies thine heart, *Chriſt is not he whom thy ſoule loueth*, when thou wilt doe nothing for his ſake, take it for a concluſion, *he hates Chriſt that hates Chriſtianitie.*

Vſe. 2. 2 Vſe is for exhortation that ſeeing wee haue ſo faire an obiect of loue as Chriſt is, wee would place our loue there and beſtow it on him who beſt deſerues it. This is a very good point to put in practiſe. Wee haue ignorant, and worldly mindes, wee knowe not the high excellencies of Chriſt Ieſus and therefore doe not affect them. The world and worth of it we knowe & loue, but too well. Againe, Sathan, and our wicked hearts doe blinde our eies, that wee cannot iudge aright of things; it is with out mindes, as it is with

with our eyes, things that are a farre off though of greater & bigger circuit, yet seeme farre lesse then those things that are neerer at hand. The earth, and earthly pleasures they are hard by, we tast, see, and handle them, wee finde the sweetnesse of them by their present possession, their natures agree with ours, they are carnall, and so are wee, and therefore they will sort with our sensuall desires: But now for Heaven and its ioy; for Christ, and his graces, and glories, they are matters a farre off, out of our kenne, we heare much talke of them in word, but our fleshly mindes cannot raise vp themselues so high, as to conceaue the true worth of them, by that which we heare spoken of them; such spirituall things fit not with our earthly dispositions, and therefore when we heare of them (take away a few faint desires, that dye of themselues) wee haue otherwise indeed no great likeing of them, we fulfill every of vs more or lesse the Propheeie of *Esay*, foretelling how corruptly men would iudge touching Christ and his conditions, even wee thinke that *Hee hath no forme nor comelinesse, and when we shall see him there's no such beautie that we should desire him.* Esay. 53. Looke how meanely the Iewes esteemed of Christ in his abasement vpon earth, so doe Christians now iudge of him though in his glory, they see no such great excellency as men speake of in Christ, in his graces, his word, his ministers, his service, that they should be so much carried away with the loue of him, or his. How often doe men aske that question in their hearts, *Which the daughters of Ierusalem asked the Church, What is thy beloued more then another beloued, O thou faire∫t among women, what is thy beloued more then another beloued that thou dost so charge vs?* Cant. 5. 9. What need such adoe, such calling and seeking and enquiring of the Watchmen of the city; such charging of vs to tell him of thee, if wee finde him is there any such singular dignity in this thy beloued aboue others? So men in their hearts and tongues doe enquire strangely touching Christ and religion, they wonder what

great matters we finde in Christ and his seruice, what good they get by so much prayers, preaching, running to sermons, and hearing: by such strictnesse in their liues, and all this for the loue of Christ, & conscience of his commandements: they see not where the benefit is and it euen angers them that others should admire what they see not, for any thing they perceiue grace deserues not so much loue as gold; the communion of Christ hath not so much delight in it, as that which they call goodfellowship; filthie pleasures relish sweeter then the ioyes of the spirit, and peace of a good conscience; they can loue the world and the things in the world, be it an impure strumpet, the very image of the divell aswell, nay rather then Iesus Christ *the brightnesse of Gods glory, and expresse image of his person*, This doctrine of louing Christ sounds strangely in the eares of carnall men; Wherefore that wee may make a right vse of this instruction two things are to bee obtained before wee shall loue Christ.

Heb. 1. 3.

1 Knowledge of Christ, what are his excellencies in himselfe and benefits toward vs. This knowledge is the mother of affection, what the eye sees not the heart rues not; and tis true on the other side, what the eye sees not the heart ioyes not. Wherefore all meanes must bee vsed to get a distinct knowledge of Christ, in all the forenamed particulars. Perfectly we shall not knowe him in this life, neither shall wee perfectly loue him, but so farre as the word hath described him to vs we may and must knowe him.

2 Holinesse of heart: for Christ, and all things in him are holy, heavenly, and spirituall, and our affections will neuer take to them, till they bee made like to them heavenly and spirituall. Tis indeed naturall to loue some things, but to loue God thats from grace, this affection is found onely in the Church, 'tis the faithfull soule calls Christ welbeloued, those that are regenerate, whose hearts are sanctified, those virgins that are spoken of in the third verse of the first

Chapter

chapter, who *haue ſmelt the odour of the ſweet perfumes, and oyntments of the* Grace of Chriſt ſhed abroad in their hearts: theſe loue Chriſt and none elſe. When thus the eyes of our mindes are enlightned, and our ſinfull hearts changed, then ſhall we begin vnfainedly to loue & admire thoſe treaſures of knowledge & Wiſdome thoſe exceeding riches of grace and glory which are ſtored in the perſon of our Lord Ieſus Chriſt: when wee ſhall then looke vpon all that good in the world which before we loued and magnified, now comparing it with Chriſt wee ſhall conclude with the Apoſtle, *The things which were advantage to me, the ſame I cannot looſe for Chriſts ſake, and iudge them to be dung that I may winne Chriſt.* Phil. 3. 8. It will be with vs as it was with the daughters of Ieruſalem before ſpoken of, who at firſt ignorantly and ſomewhat ſcornfully asked the ſpouſe what was her beloved, that ſhee ſought ſo much after him, but when ſhee had at large deſcribed him in all his excellencies, and told them: *This is my beloued, this is my loue O Daughters of Ieruſalem,* Cant. 5. 16. Now their eyes are opened, and their hearts touched, they are as deſirous to goe ſeeke him as the ſpouſe her ſelfe and now they begin to enquire of her: *O thou faireſt among women, whether is thy beloued gone, whether is he turned aſide, that wee may goe and ſeeke him with thee chap. 6. 1.* Now the Lord open our eyes by his ſpirit, that wee may cleerely ſee and ardently loue Chriſt, to whom with the Father, &c.

FINIS.